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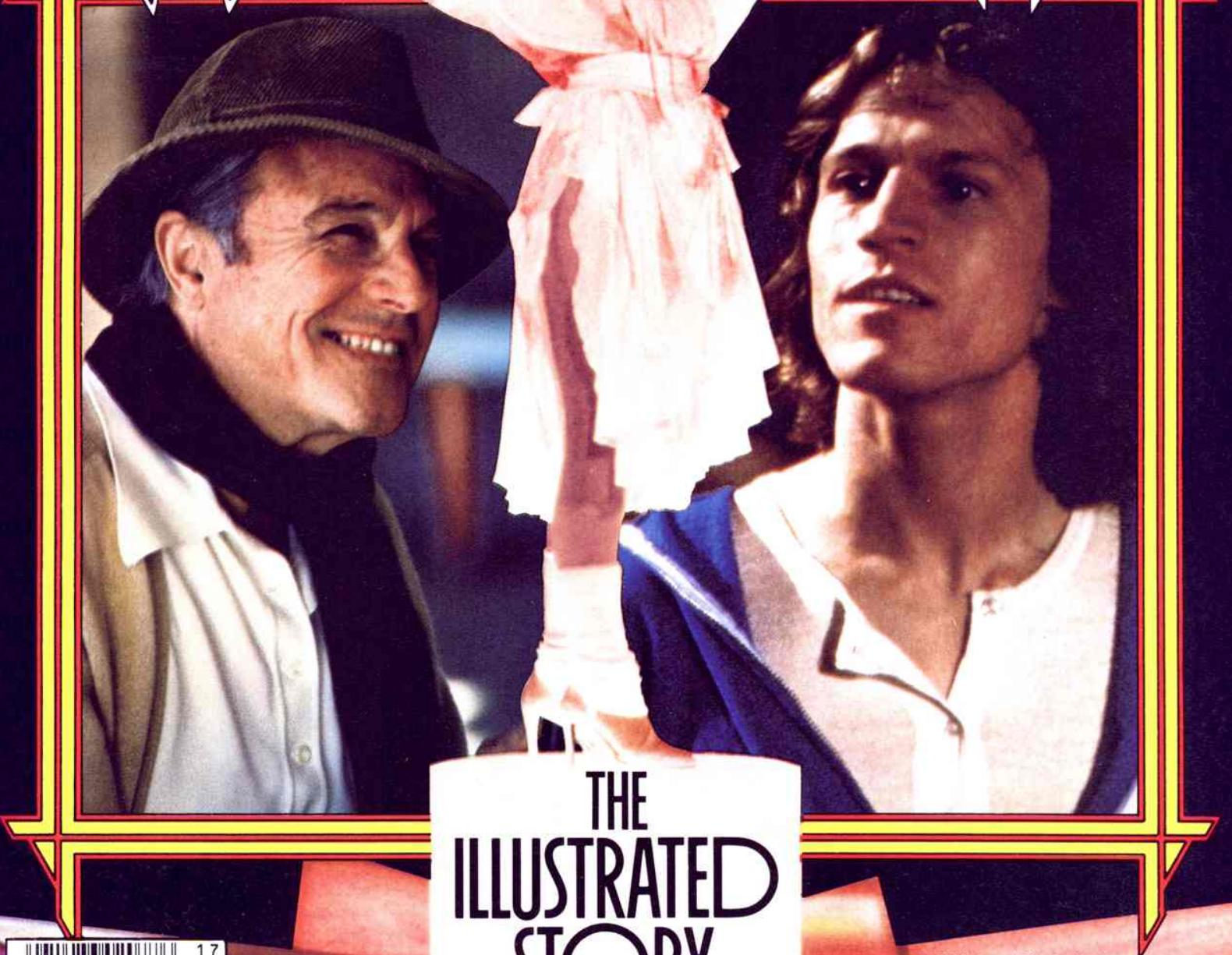
No. 17

\$2.00

A MARVEL SUPER SPECIAL MAGAZINE

XANADU

TM



THE
ILLUSTRATED
STORY



17

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PLUS MUSIC • DANCE • COSTUMES • SPECIAL EFFECTS



STAN LEE PRESENTS

A MARVEL SUPER SPECIAL MAGAZINE

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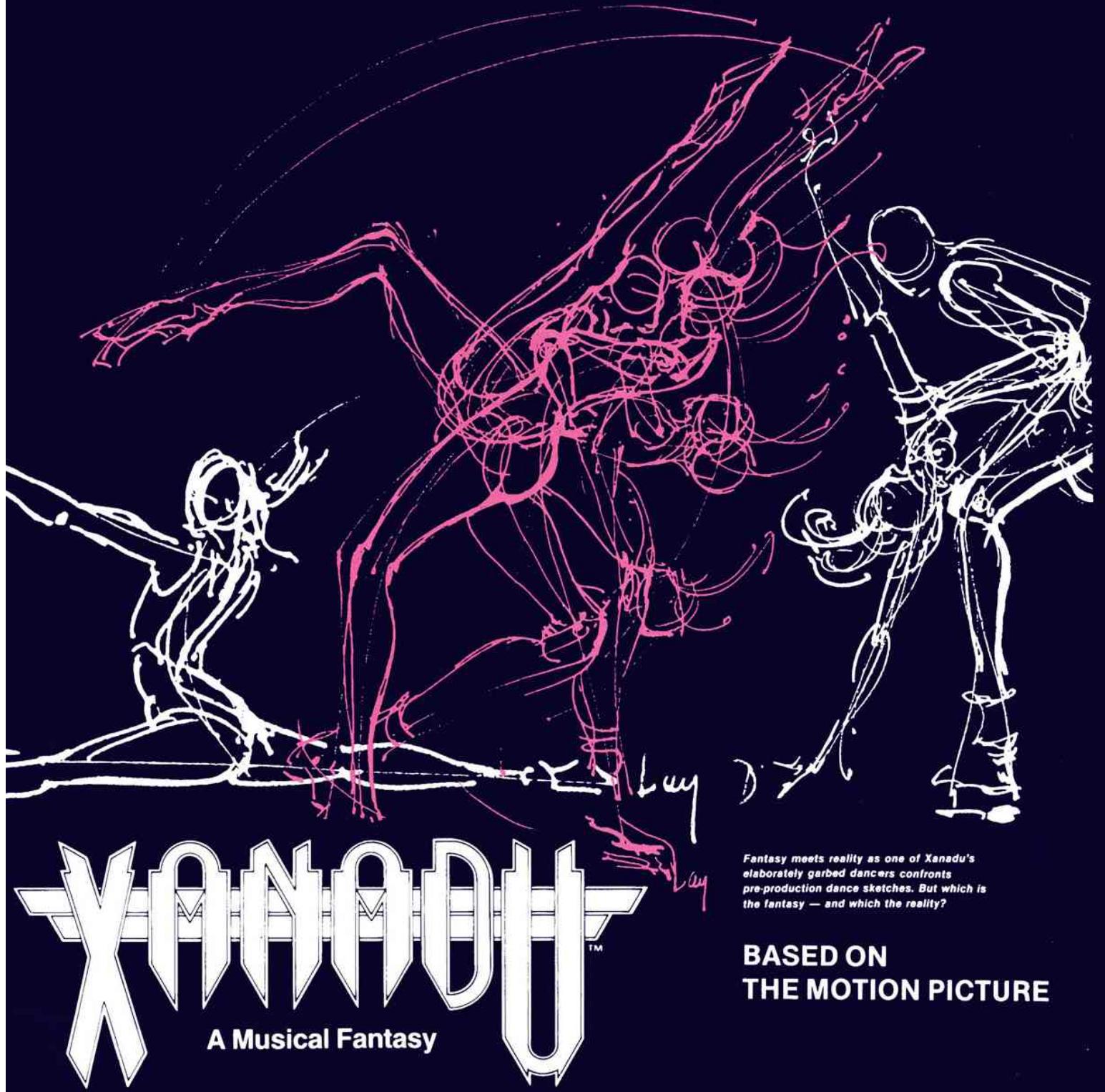
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Vol. 1 No. 17, Summer 1980

CONTENTS:

XANADU The Illustrated Story	5
THE MAKING OF XANADU	37
I'M ALIVE Biographies of the Stars and Creators	38
XANIMATION Xanadu's Fantasy-Within-A-Fantasy	53
MAGIC The Special Effects Story	44
DANCIN'...and Music, Too!	54
SUSPENDED IN TIME Xanadu's Glitz Costumes.....	61

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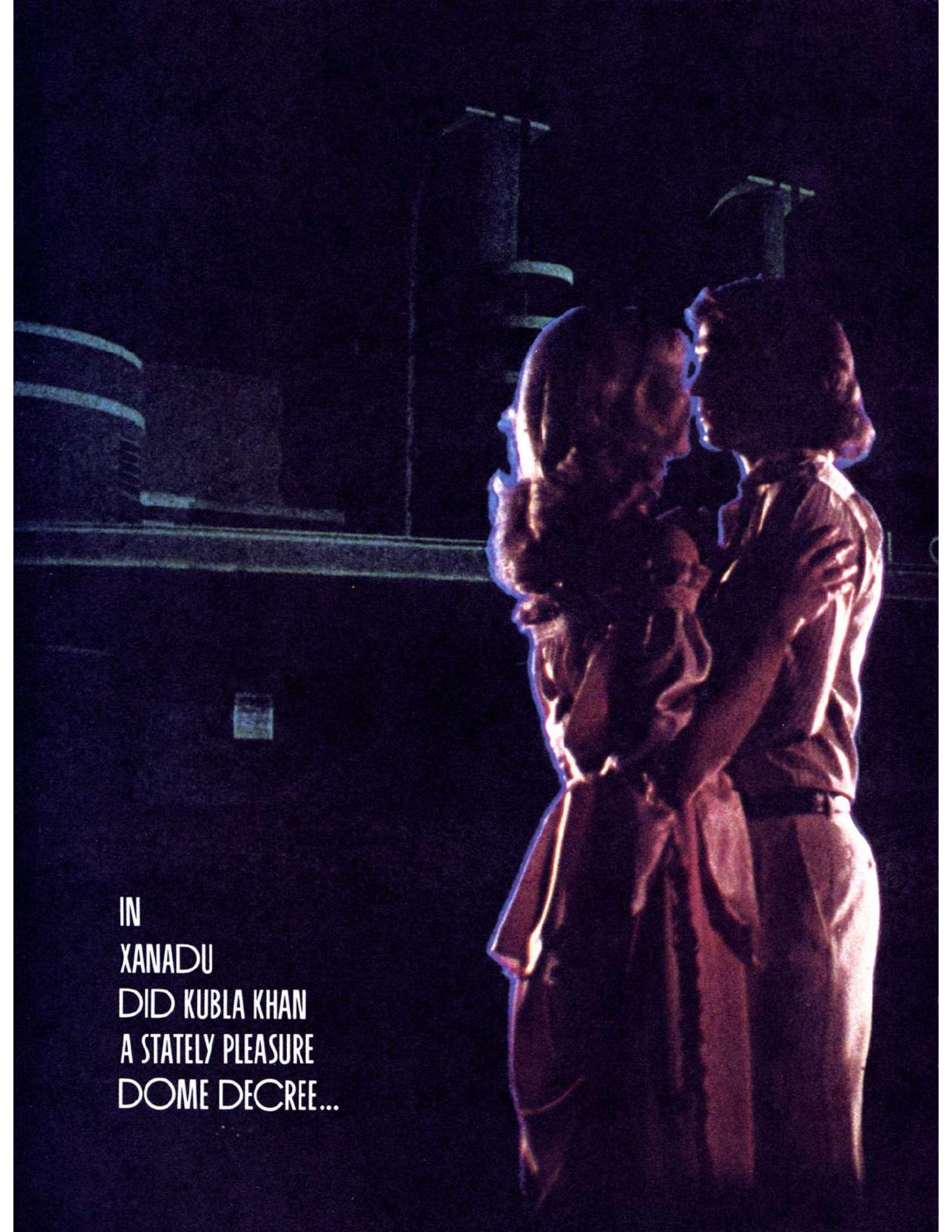
XANADU

A Musical Fantasy

Fantasy meets reality as one of Xanadu's elaborately garbed dancers confronts pre-production dance sketches. But which is the fantasy — and which the reality?

BASED ON
THE MOTION PICTURE

UNIVERSAL PRESENTS • A LAWRENCE GORDON PRODUCTION
Starring OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN • GENE KELLY • "XANADU"
Also starring MICHAEL BECK
Written by RICHARD CHRISTIAN DANUS and MARC REID RUBEL
Director of Photography VICTOR J. KEMPER, A.S.C.
Songs for OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN by JOHN FARRAR
Songs for ELECTRIC LIGHT ORCHESTRA by JEFF LYNNE
Musical Scoring by BARRY DeVORZON
Executive Producer LEE KRAMER • Co-Producer JOEL SILVER
Produced by LAWRENCE GORDON
Directed by ROBERT GREENWALD
A UNIVERSAL PICTURE



IN
XANADU
DID KUBLA KHAN
A STATELY PLEASURE
DOME DECREE...

STAN LEE PRESENTS: A WONDROUS JOURNEY INTO A WORLD OF HOPES AND DREAMS...

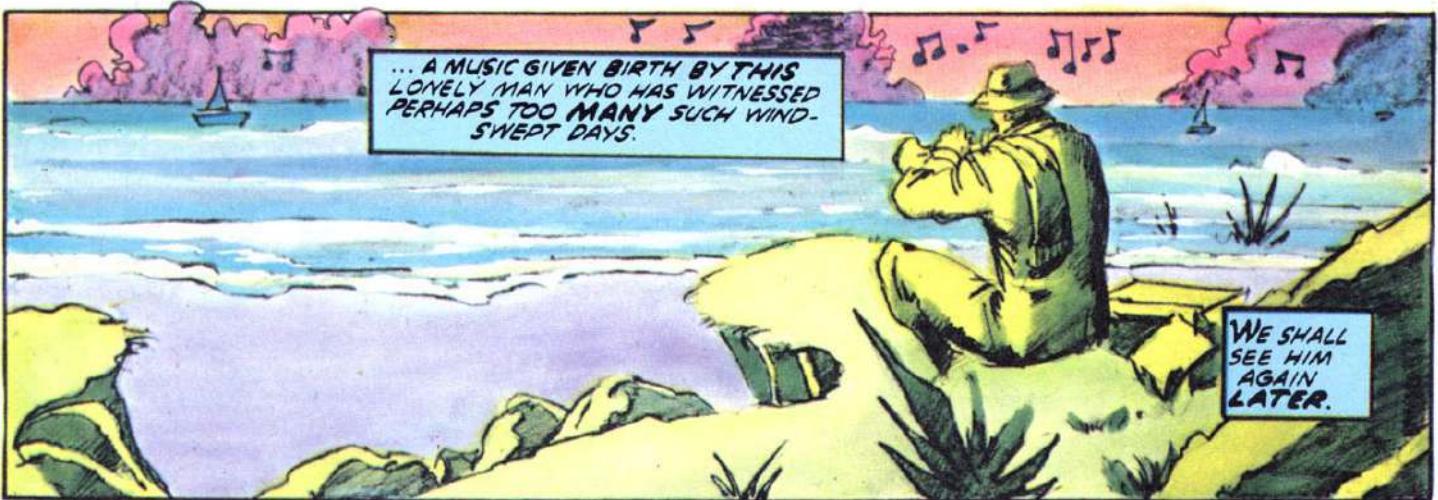
XANADU

Based on the screenplay by
RICHARD CHRISTIAN DANUS
and MARK REID RUBELL



Script—J.M. DE MATTEIS
Art concept and Layouts—RICH BUCKLER and JIMMY JAMES
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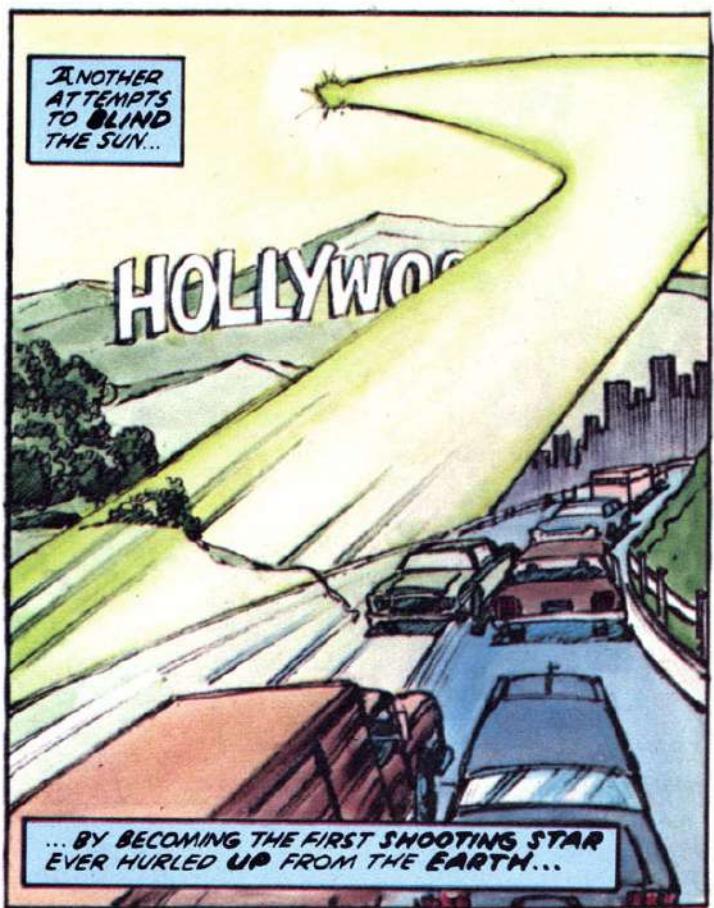
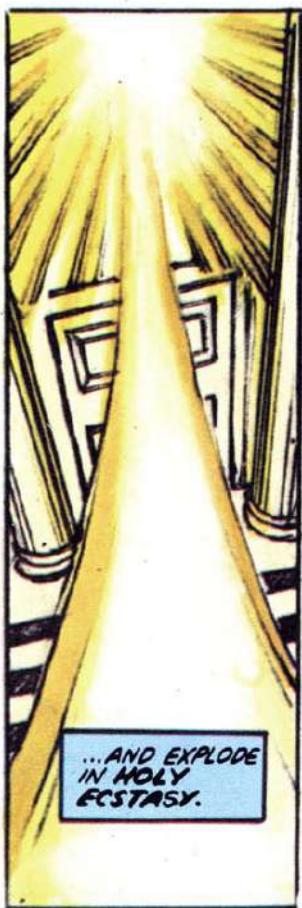
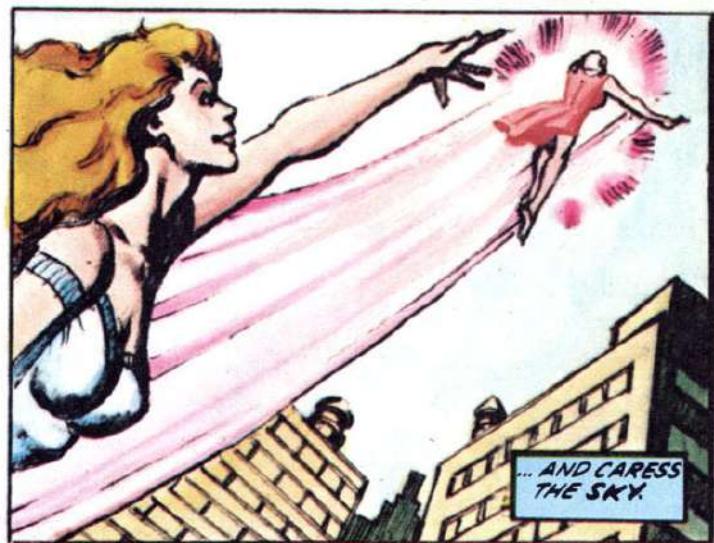
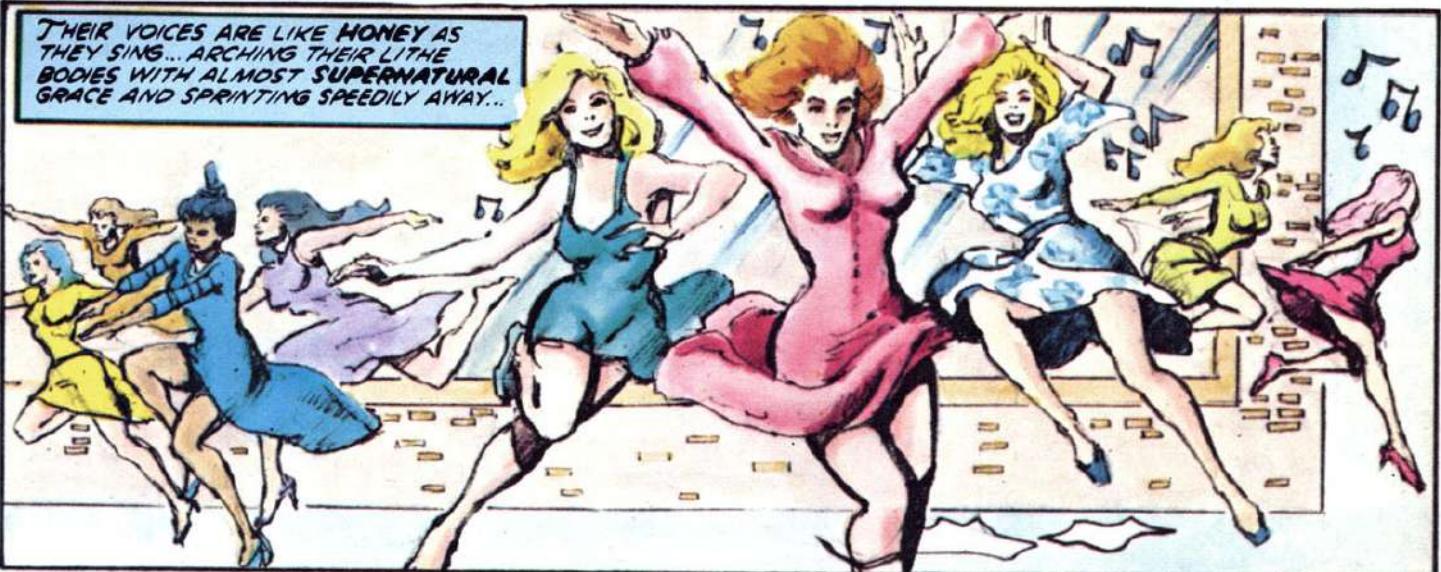
THE CREATIVE SPIRIT RIDES THIS CYCLE ENDLESSLY, BUT
THOUGH THE DREAMER MAY MOMENTARILY LOSE HOPE...

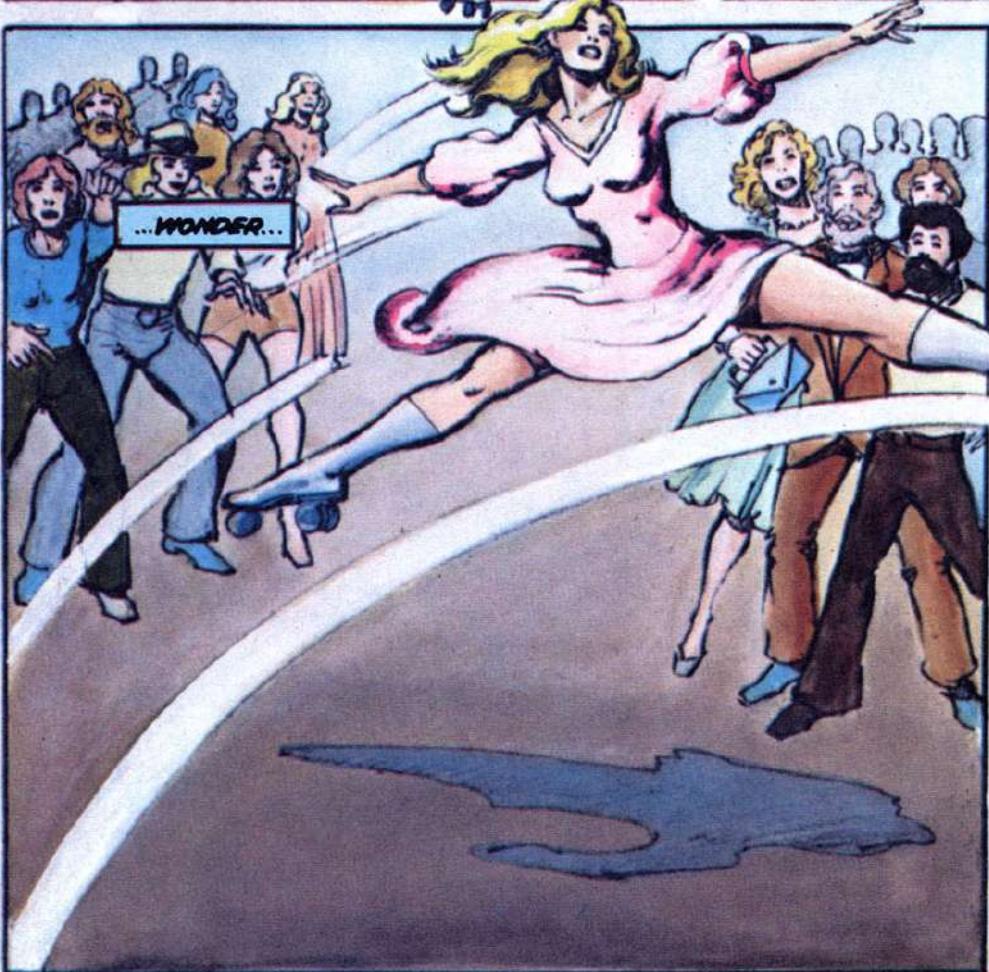
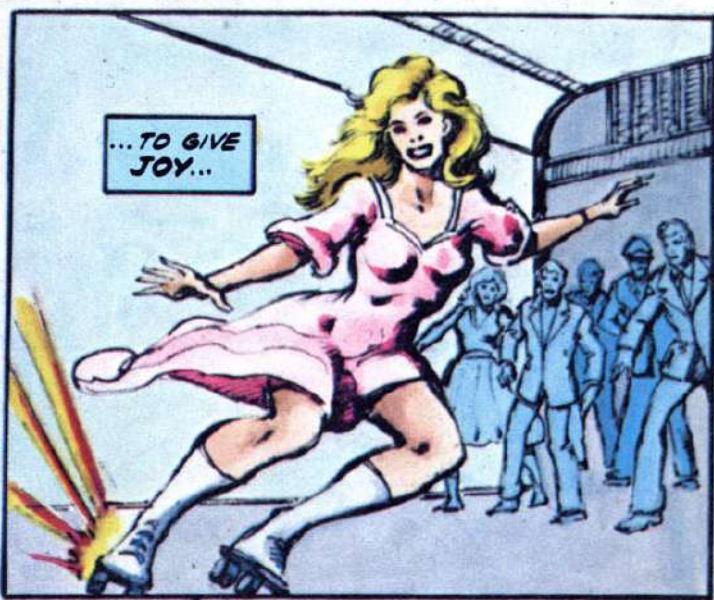
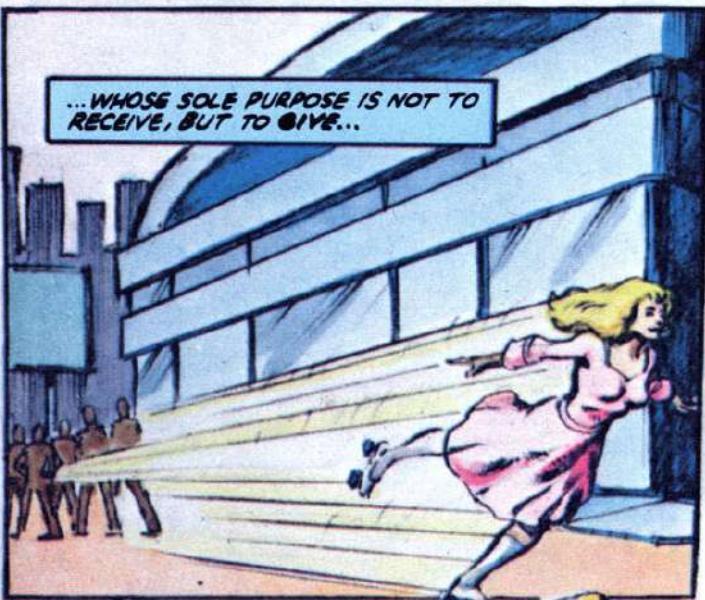
...THE DREAM STILL REMAINS. IT FLOATS...

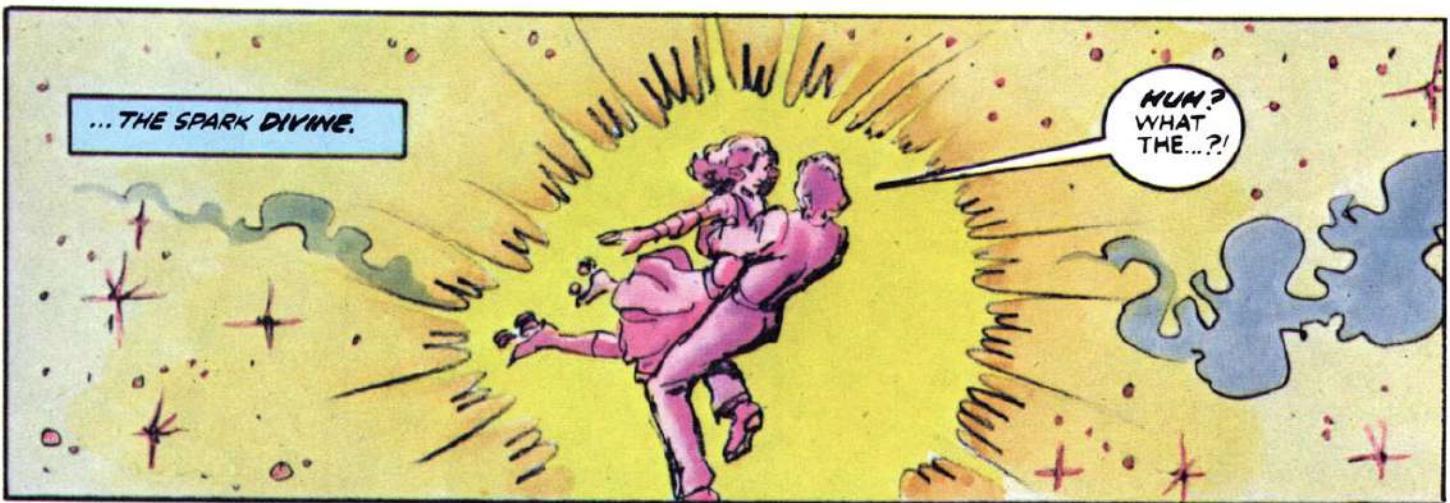
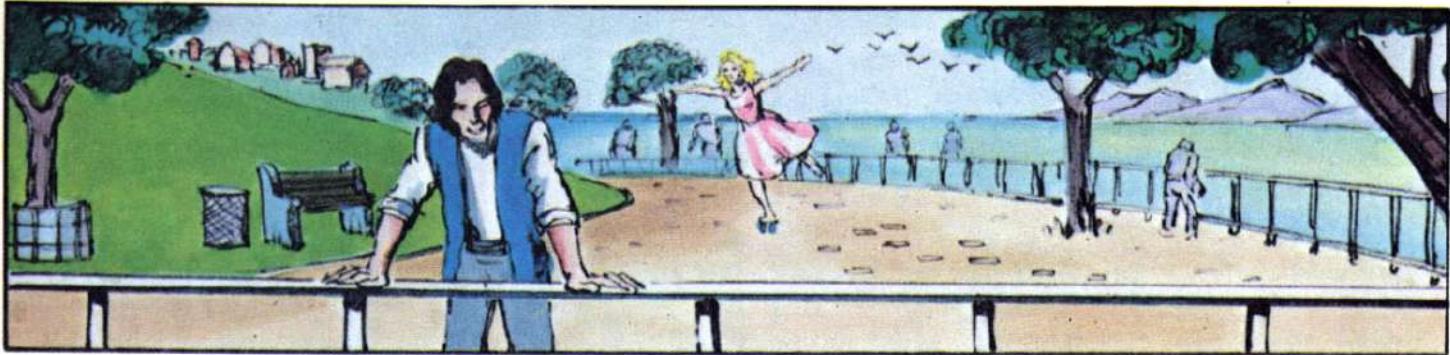
...IT FLUTTERS
PAST THE MURAL...

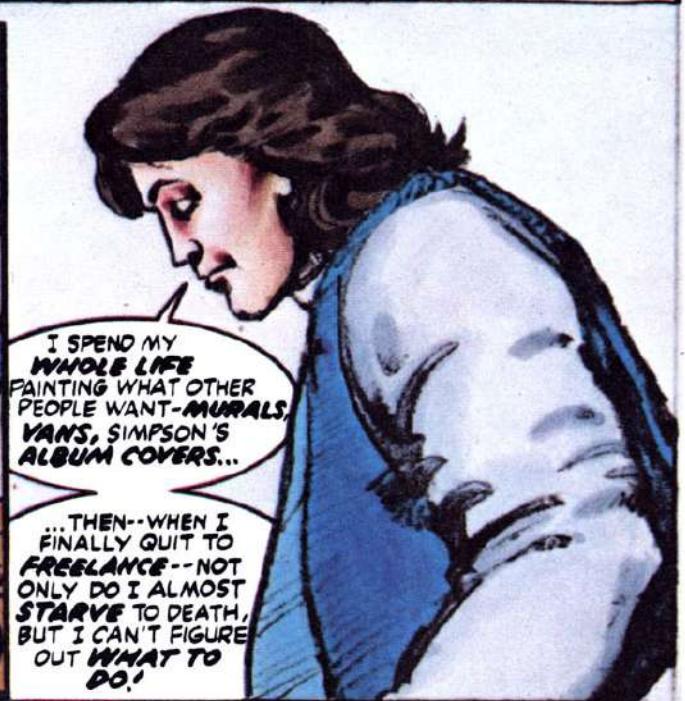
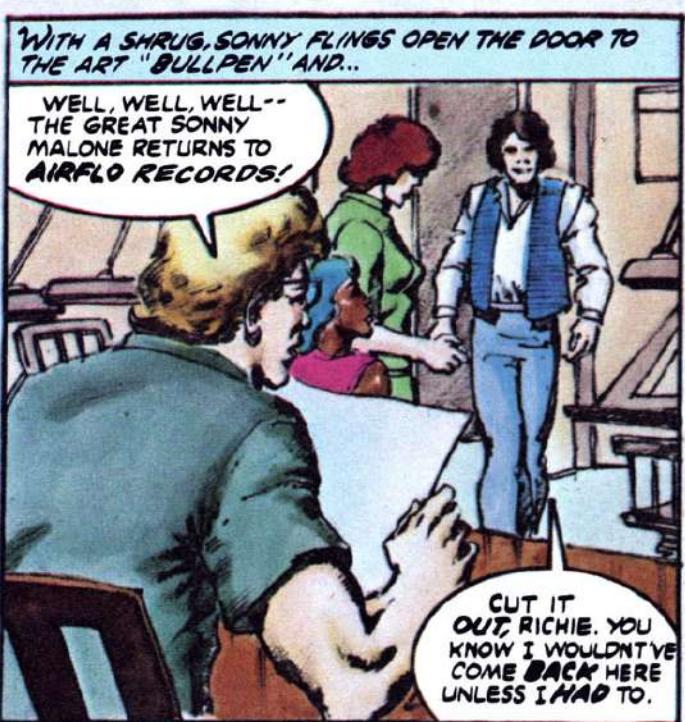
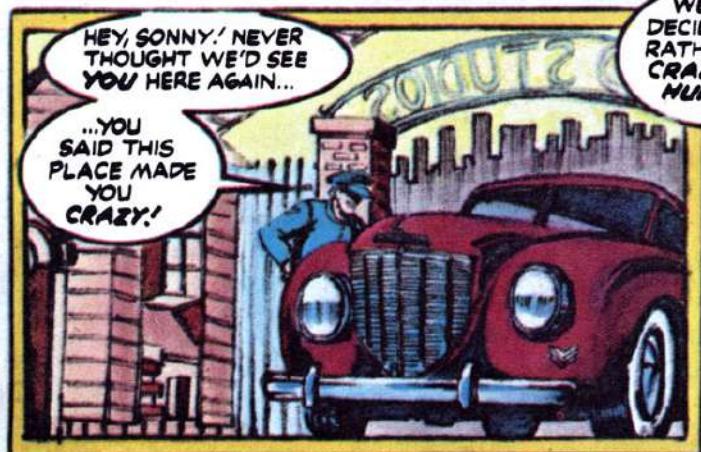
...IT EXPLODES
INTO Life!

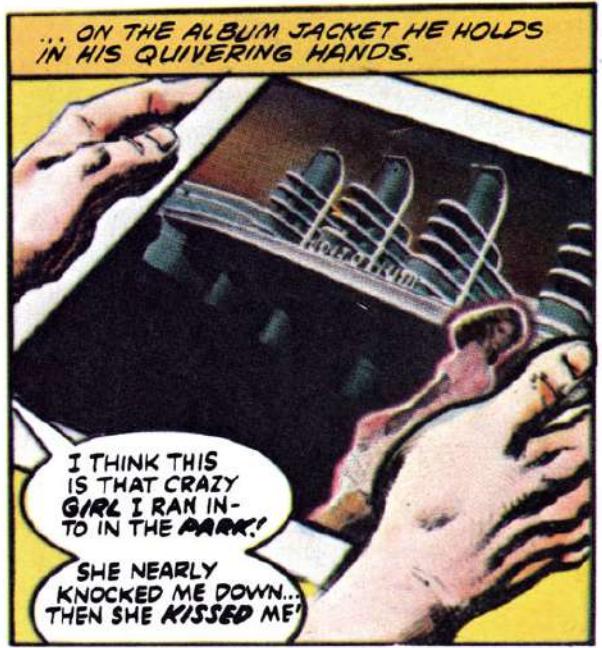
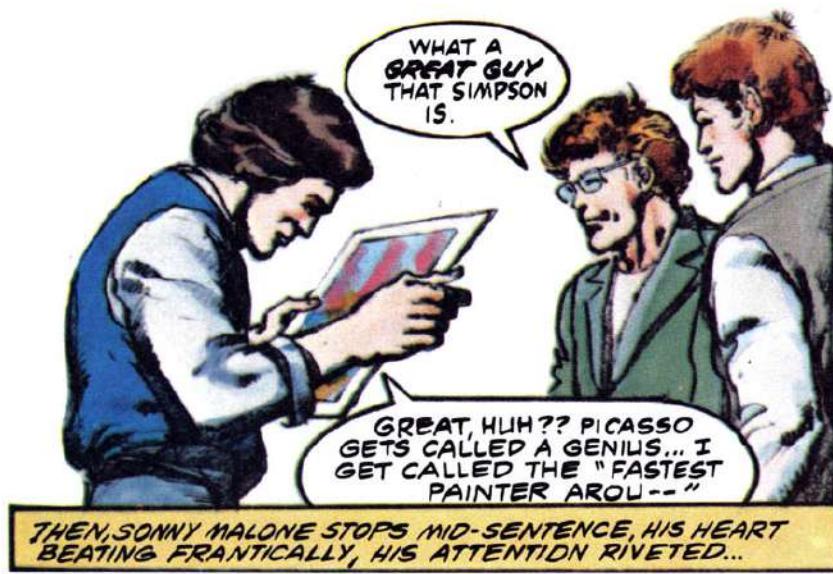
THEIR VOICES ARE LIKE HONEY AS
THEY SING... ARCHING THEIR LITHE
BODIES WITH ALMOST SUPERNATURAL
GRACE AND SPRINTERG SPEEDILY AWAY...





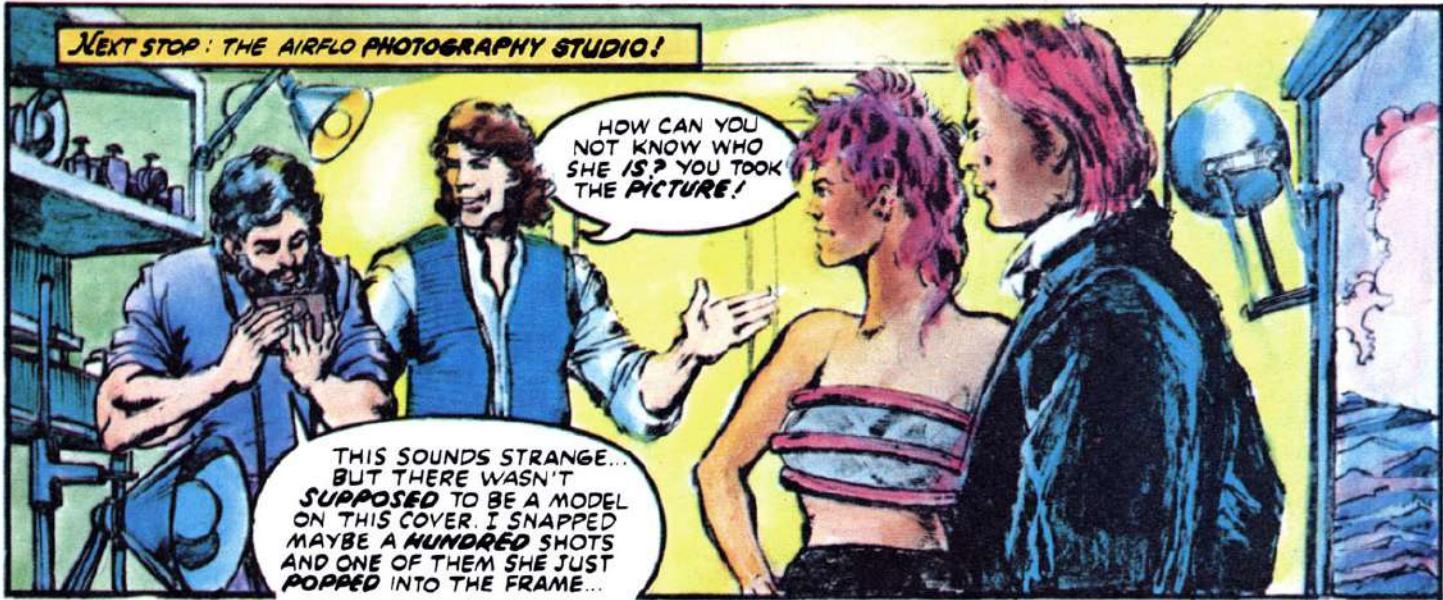






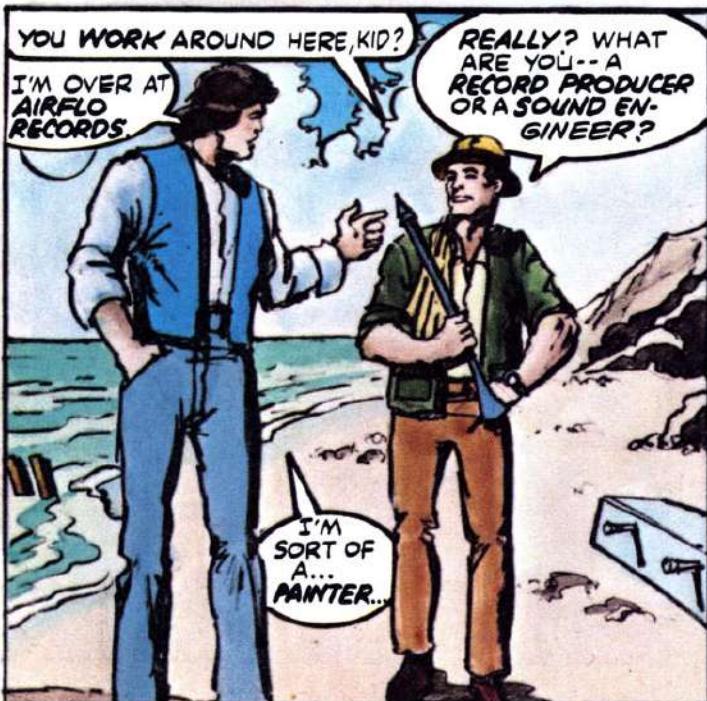


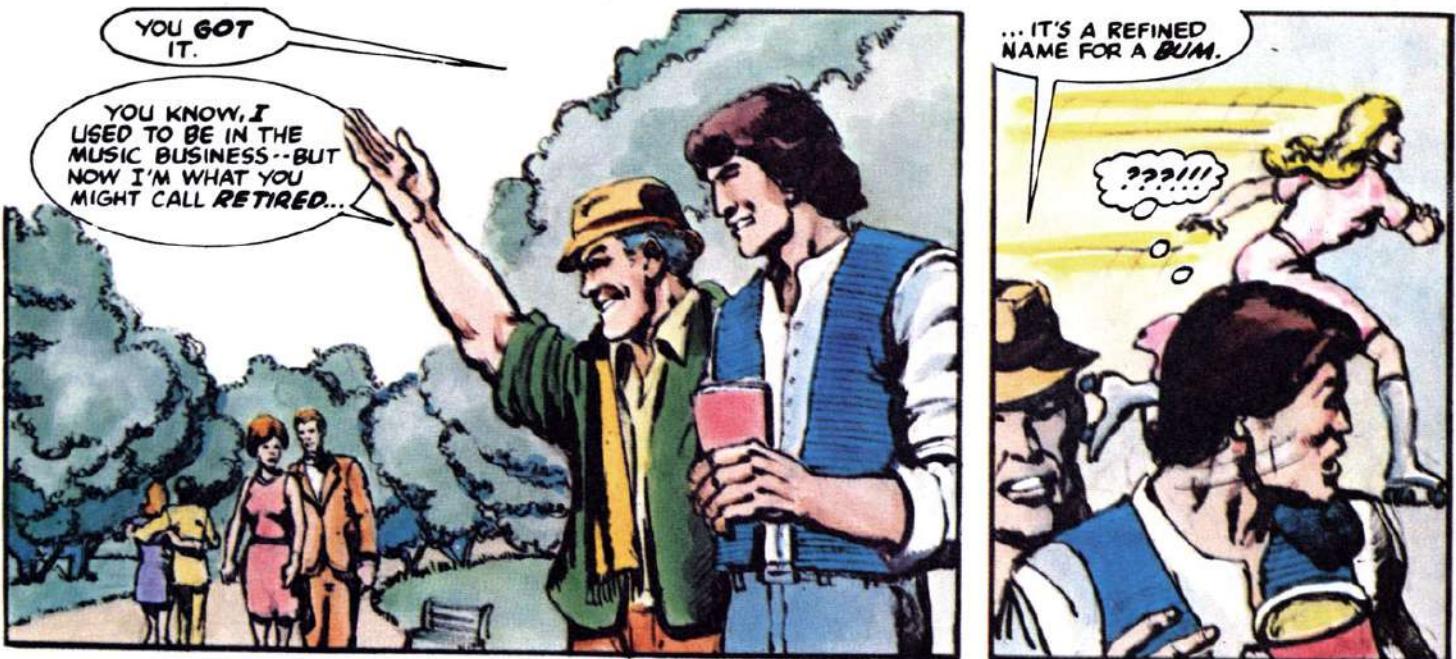
NEXT STOP: THE AIRFLO PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO!



...AND IT DRAWS HIM, ALMOST
AGAINST HIS WILL...

...TO A CERTAIN SAD-EYED CLARINET
PLAYER WE HAVE SEEN BEFORE...





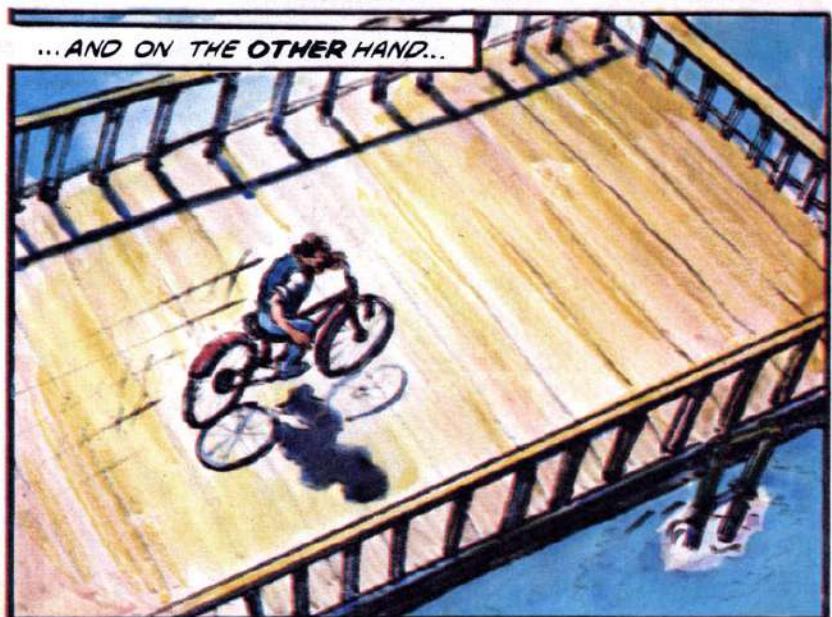
BUT DREAMS ARE STRANGE AND INSCRUTABLE IN THEIR WAYS...



HEY--
YOU ON THE
SKATES--WAIT
UP A MINUTE,
WILL YOU?



HEY--
GET OFF
THE PIER
WITH THAT
THING!



...AND ON THE OTHER HAND...



... THEY REFUSE TO
BE CAUGHT...

WHERE
THE
HELL?



THERE!



KKRA-
SH

SPLASH

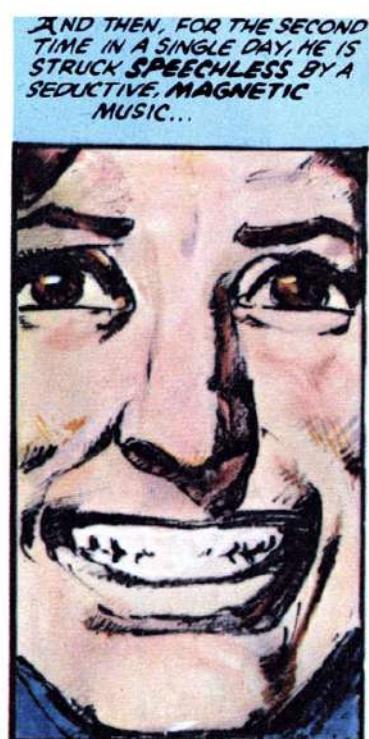
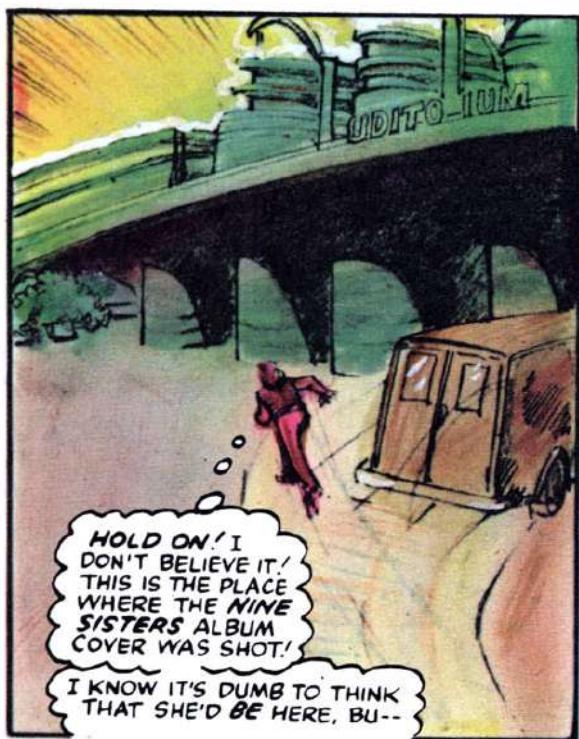
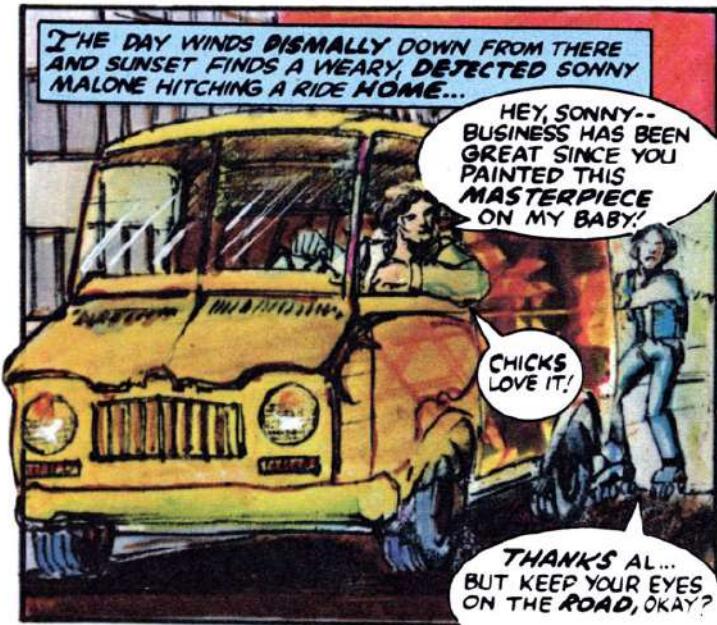


... UNTIL THEY'RE GOOD
AND READY...

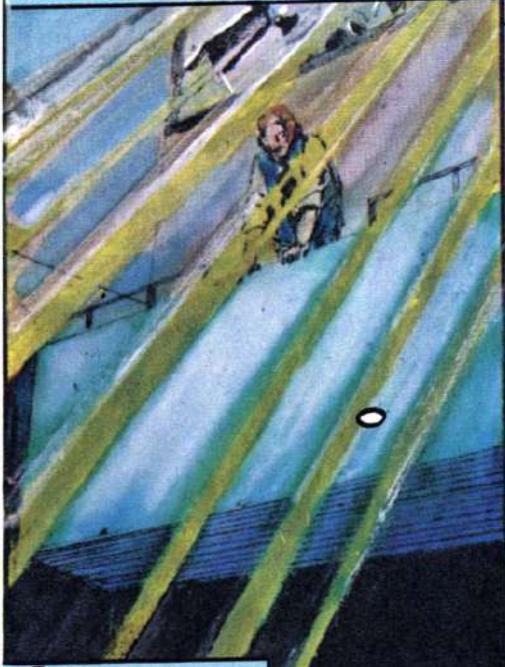
YOU'RE
A REAL
ERROL
FLYNN,
KID...



WHAT
OTHER
STUNTS
DO YOU
DO?



THE OLD AUDITORIUM WAS ONCE A PROUD AND GLORIOUS ARENA, A MEETING PLACE FOR THOUSANDS, A HAVEN FROM THE WEIGHTY BURDENS THAT DRAG MEN DOWN INTO MOURNING AND RUIN...



BUT NOW IT IS A PLACE FIT FOR MOURNING; A PATHETIC RUBBLE-STREWN WRECK OF ITSELF.

THE MUSIC THAT HAS DRAWN HIM HERE SEEKS TO PAUSE AND MOURN, ALSO. AND THEN...

THAT NOISE... SOUNDS LIKE SOMEONE IS DOWN THERE... SKATING!



IT'S ME. HI!



HEY--I'VE BEEN ASKING ABOUT YOU ALL DAY!

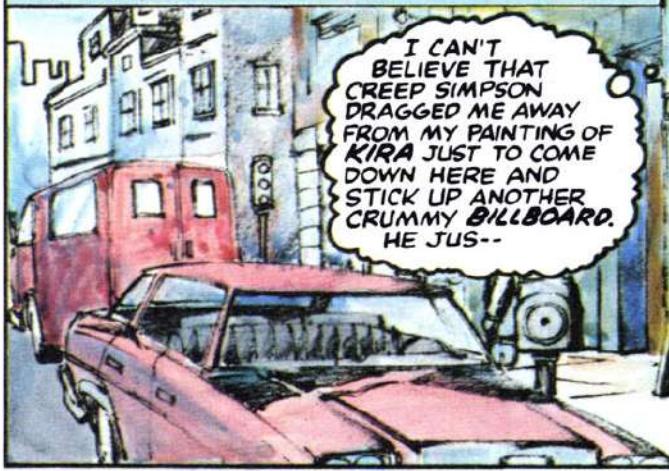
YOU MAY NOT BELIEVE THIS, BUT I'M PAINTING AN ALBUM COVER AND...

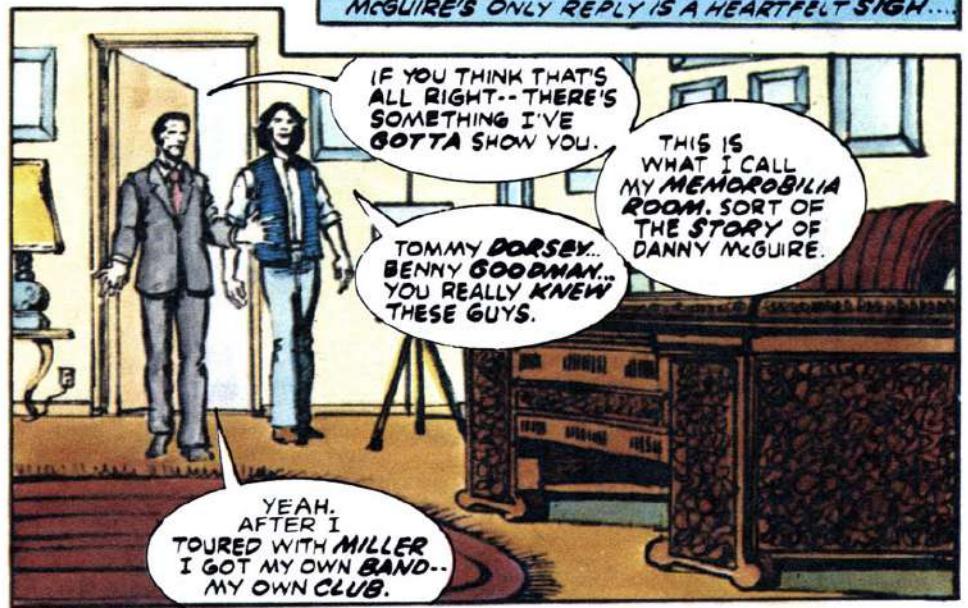
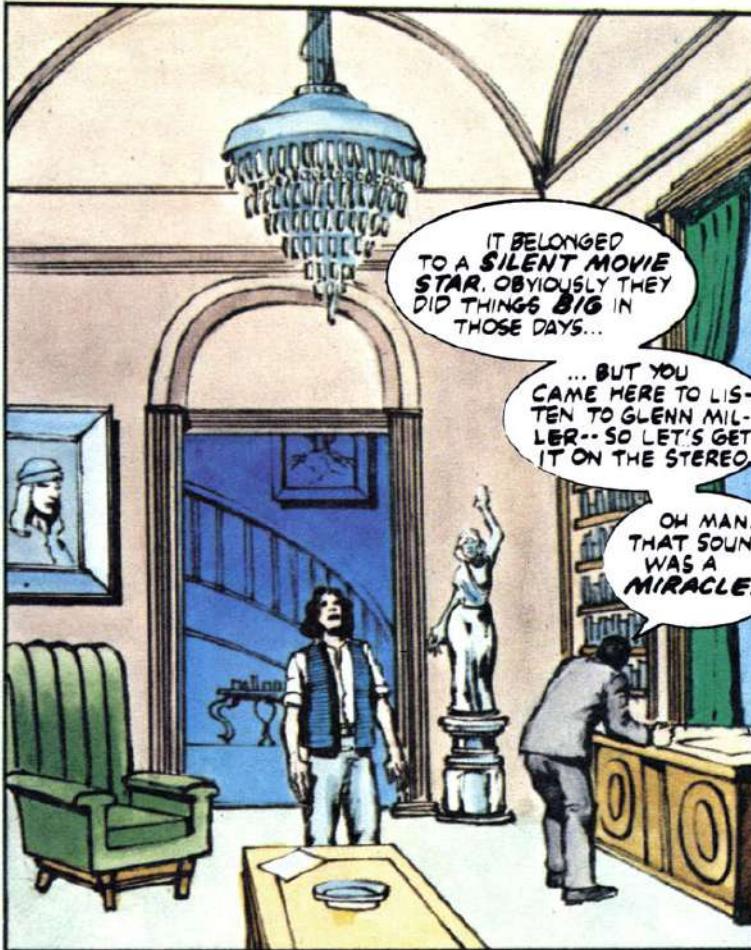
...YOU'RE ON IT!

WHY SHOULDN'T I BELIEVE IT?



BUT THE HEADY THRILLS OF NIGHT MUST GIVE WAY TO THE MUNDANE CHORES OF DAY. AND SO...







...AND SHORTLY...

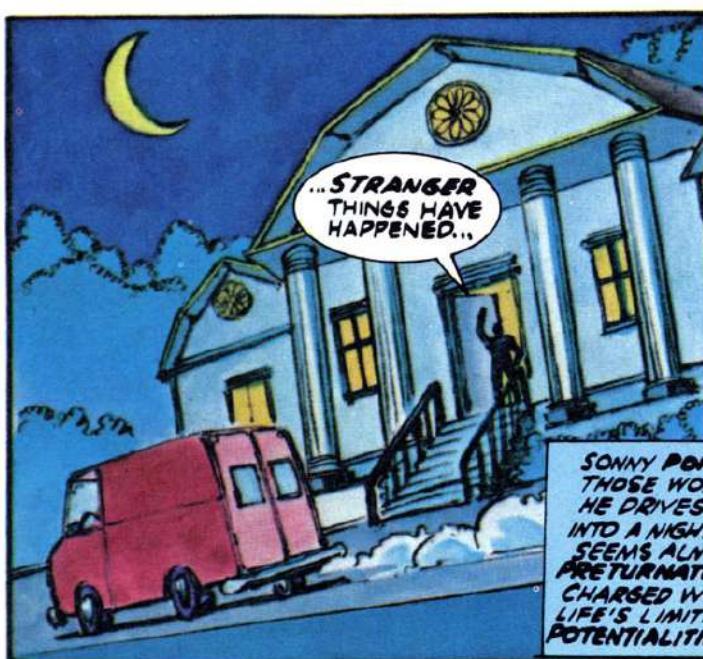


I GUESS IT'S LIKE FALLING IN LOVE. YOU GOTTA SPECIAL ATTACHMENT LIKE YOU AND YOUR FRIEND... UH...

WELL I'D LOVE TO OPEN UP ANOTHER JOINT AGAIN I'VE EVEN HAD REAL ESTATE AGENTS LOOKING
...BUT THEY CAN'T SEEM TO FIND THE RIGHT PLACE.



KIRA. HEY--WHY DON'T YOU HELP ME LOOK? MAYBE YOU CAN COME UP WITH SOMETHING. YEAH...



SONNY PONDERS THOSE WORDS AS HE DRIVES OFF INTO A NIGHT THAT SEEMS ALMOST PRETURNARILY CHARGED WITH LIFE'S LIMITLESS POTENTIALITIES.

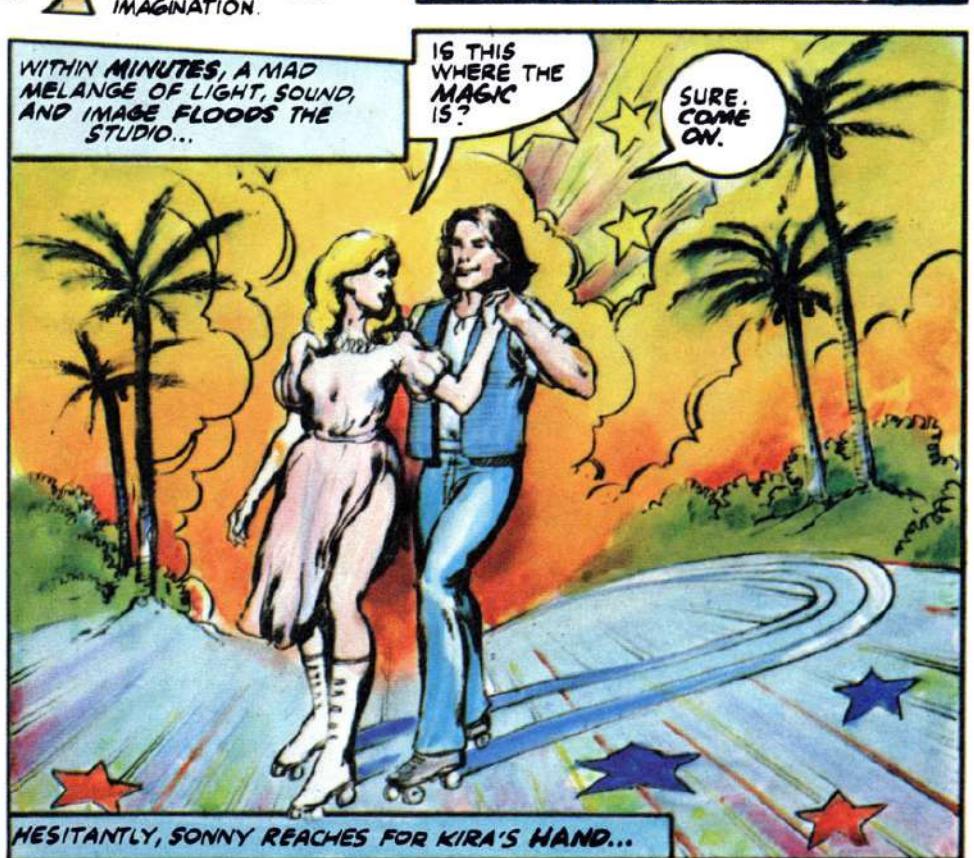


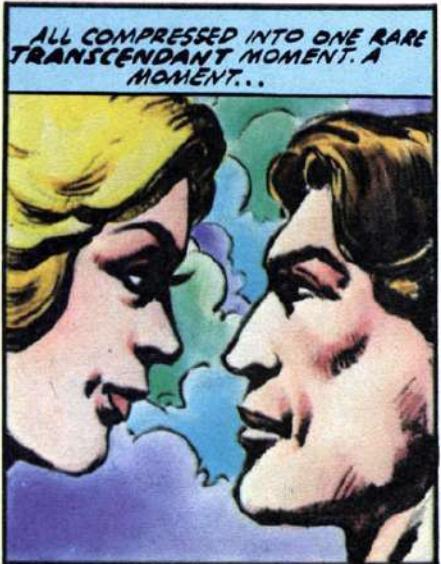
WELL...



JUST A FEW SECONDS. YOU PAINT BEAUTIFULLY.









...AND SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T KNOW WHAT THEY BELIEVE IN...

MORNING...

THIS PLACE? THEY USED TO HAVE WRESTLING HERE.

SO COULD THE TITANIC WHAT PUT YOU ONTO THIS, ANYWAY?

A GIRL.

THAT EXPLAINS EVERYTHING.

WITH SOME FIXING UP-- IT COULD LOOK TER-RIFIC.

BUT DANNY-- DON'T YOU THINK THERE'S A CERTAIN KIND OF AURA ABOUT THIS PLACE?

YEAH, WELL-- I DON'T KNOW, I CAN'T TAKE THIS TOO SERIOUSLY-- BUT IF I WERE GONNA DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT...

...IT JUST MIGHT WORK...

YOU THINK SO?

I SEE A BANDSTAND-- RIGHT OVER THERE IN THAT CORNER. AND A BIG BAND LIKE IN THE FORTIES.

NO... BANDSTANDS WENT OUT WITH RUNNING BOARDS. RIGHT OVER THERE-- A GREAT ROCK BAND...

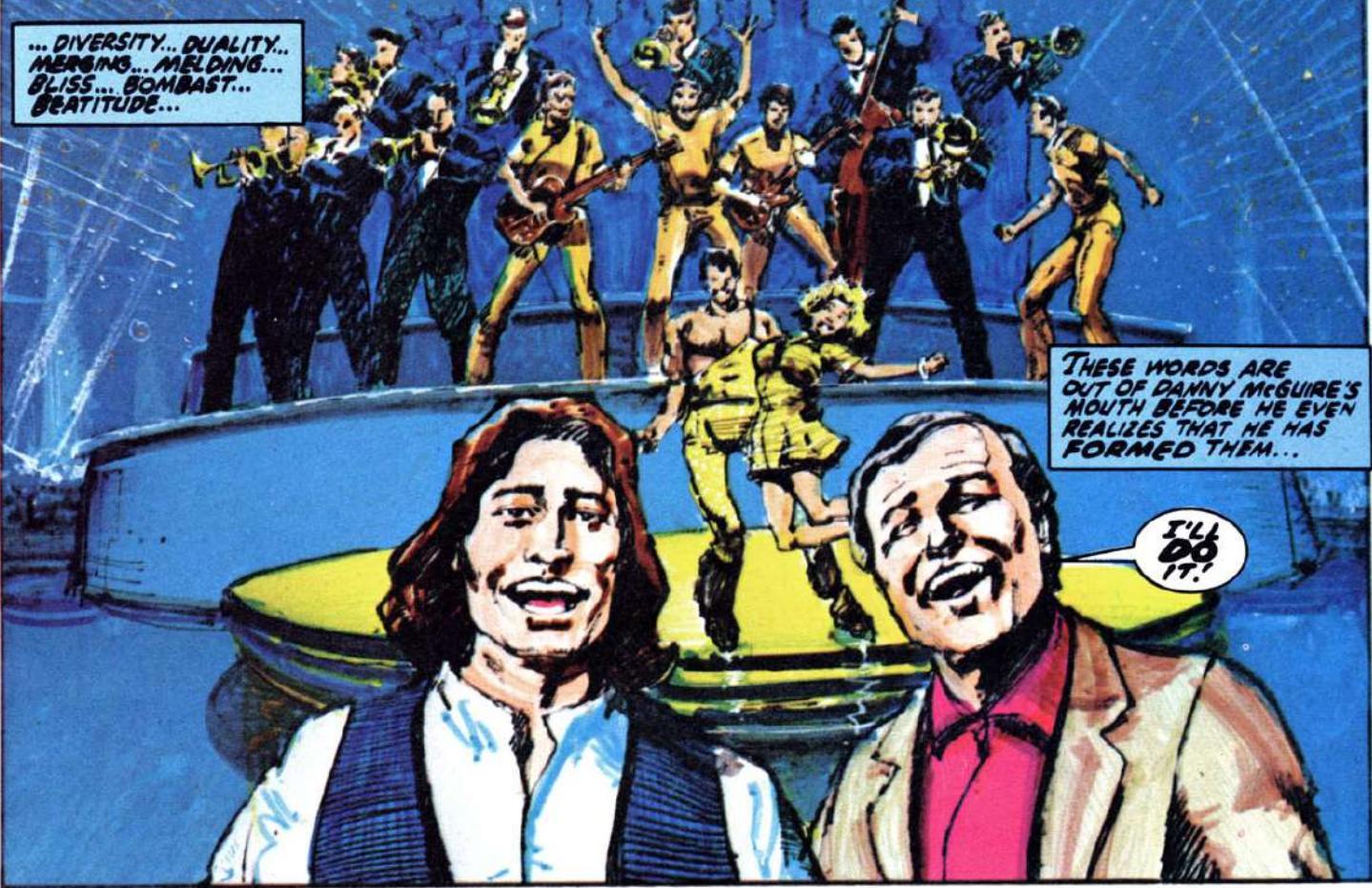
NO NO NO! REAL SMOOTH DANCERS. WILD TROMBONE. THE BAND DECKED OUT IN TUXEDOS...

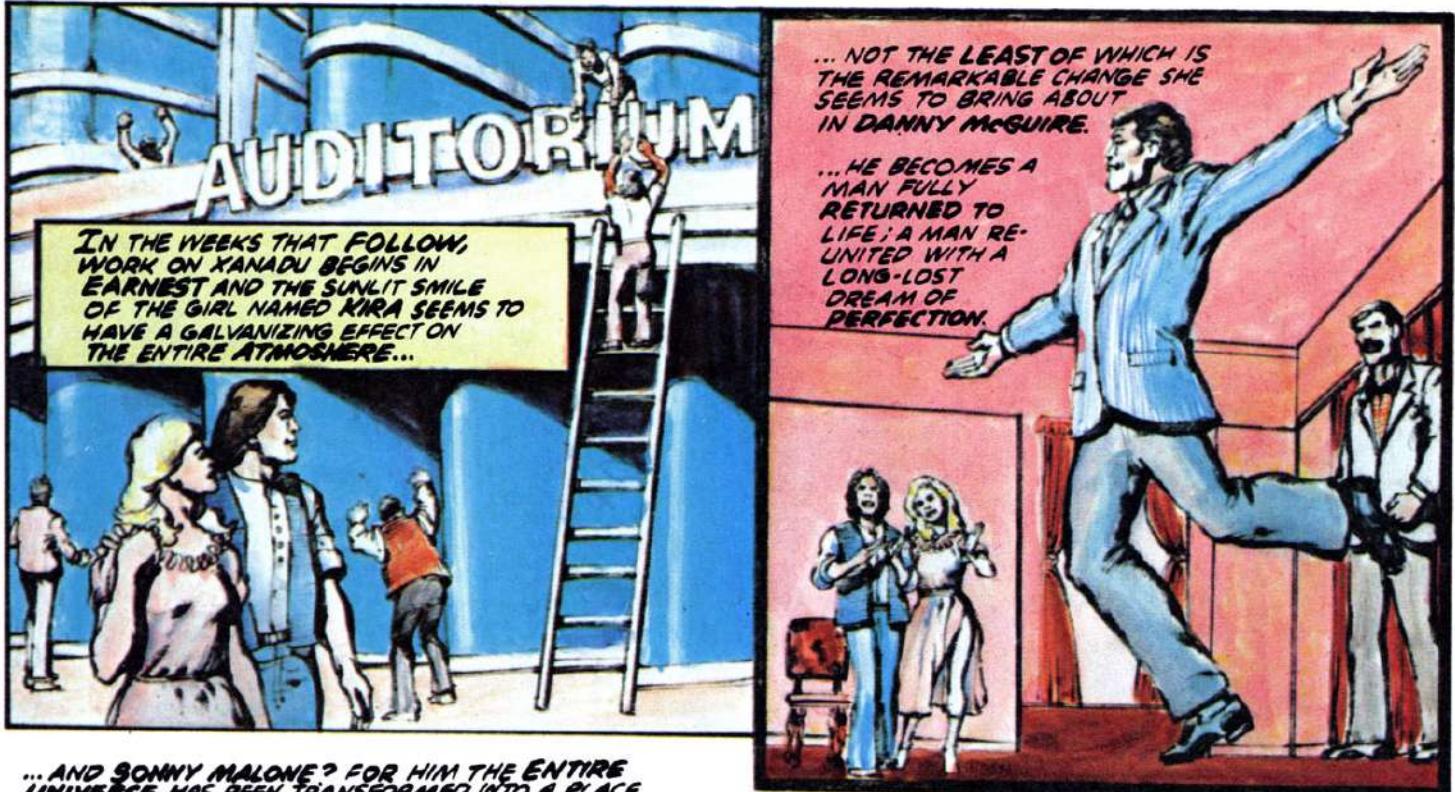
NAW! SIX GUYS WEARING ELECTRIC ORANGE...

EVERYBODY DRESSED IN ELEGANCE AND STYLE-- LIKE IN THE OLD DAYS.

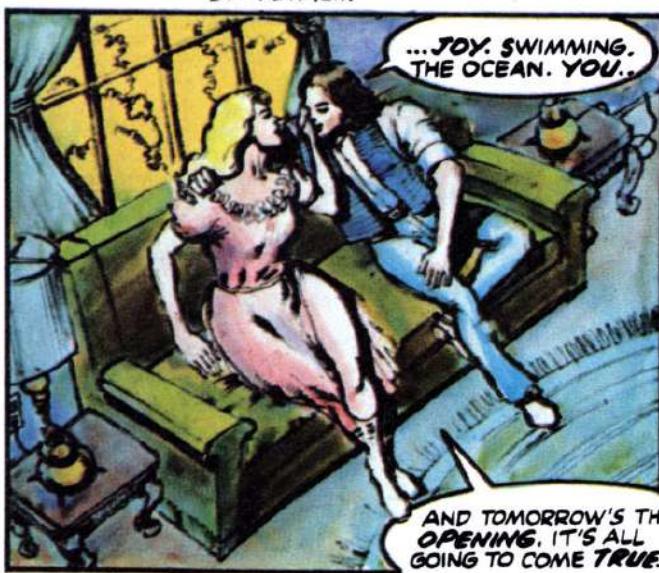
SYNTHESIZER-- HEAVY PERCUSSIONS... AND ELECTRIC GUITARS...

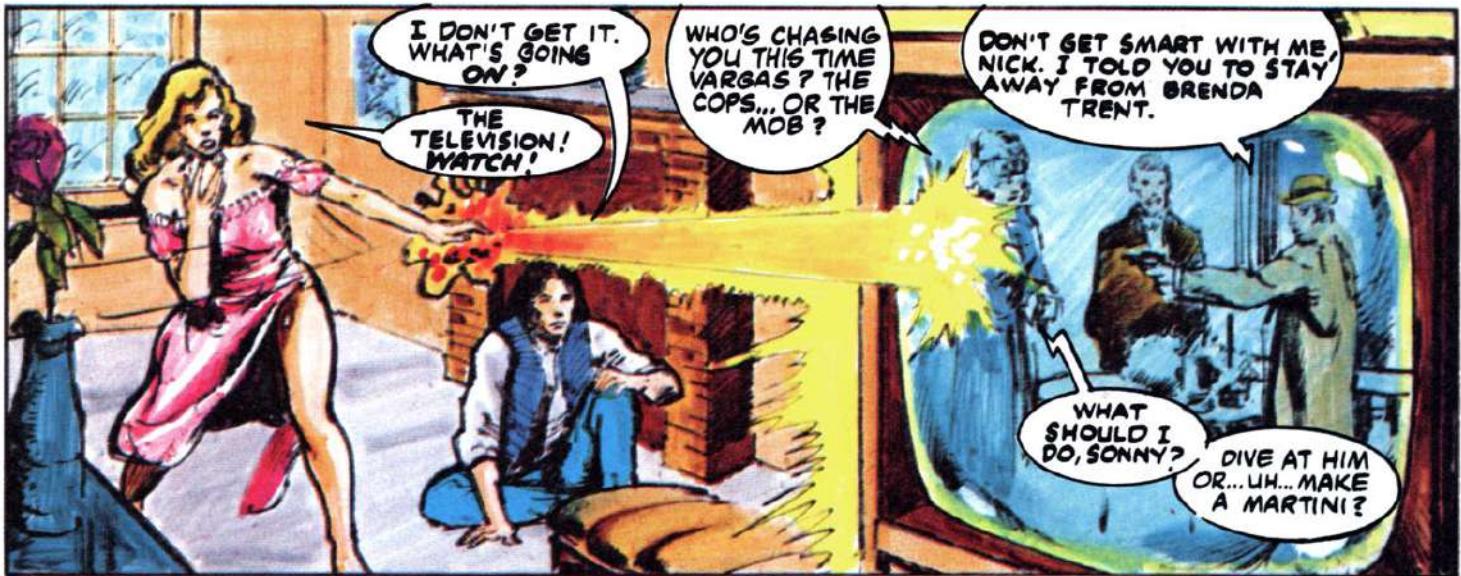
DREAMS:
DECADES OF DREAMS... GROWING... SWIRLING COALESCING...





... AND SONNY MALONE? FOR HIM THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO A PLACE OF TOTAL...





LATER, DANNY FINDS THE YOUNG ARTIST PERCHED ON HIS CLARINET ROCK AND LEARNS THAT THOUGH THE DREAM IS ALIVE AND WELL...

...THE DREAMER SEEMS LOST FOREVER...

SONNY...?

I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU. WHERE YOU BEEN? DON'T YOU KNOW WE'RE READY TO OPEN.

I CAN'T GO. XANADU DOESN'T MATTER ANYMORE.

WHATTA YOU MEAN IT DOESN'T MATTER?! XANADU IS OUR DREAM!

NO! WE KILL THEM! IF YOU GIVE UP NOW-- YOU'LL BE SITTING ON THAT ROCK THIRTY YEARS FROM NOW... JUST LIKE I WAS DOING!

I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL KID-- I FELT THE SAME WAY ONCE. I DIDN'T KNOW HOW IMPORTANT LOVE IS.

BUT LET ME TELL YOU SOME-
THING: SOMEHOW, SOMEWHERE--
THERE'S A WAY TO GET HER! IF
SHE GOT HERE-- THERE'S A WAY
TO GET THERE!

THERE'S NO XANADU... 'CAUSE THERE'S NO KIRA,
DREAMS DIE...

BELIEVE ME, KID...

"...IT'S UP TO YOU..."

IT'S A CHANCE... AND WHAT WOULD LIFE BE WITHOUT CHANCES? AND, WHEN THEY ARE TAKEN IN THE NAME OF LOVE, CHANCES BECOME MORE THAN JUST EVERYDAY RISKS...

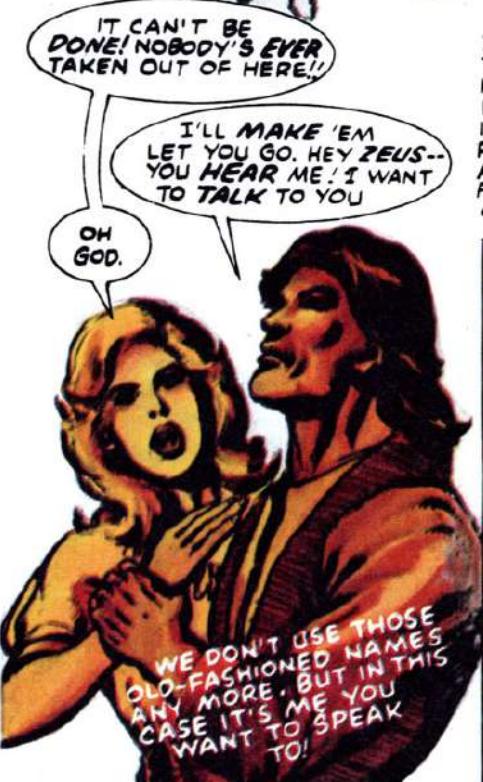
...THEY BECOME...

Magic!

TIME SHRINKS, SWELLS, EXPLODES,
COLLAPSES... LIGHT BLINDS AND
GIVES SECOND SIGHT... SOUND
DEAFENS AND DELIGHTS...

SONNY HAD COME FOLLOWING AN
INNER VOICE NOT KNOWING WHAT
TO EXPECT.

HE IS FRIGHTENED, YET HE PERSISTS
WILLING TO SACRIFICE ALL FOR HIS
BELOVED...





THEN HE HEARS THE STRAINS OF A FAMILIAR MUSIC AND SONNY KNOWS: HE AND KIRA HAVE TRIUMPHED, HAVE BEATEN THE GODS AT THEIR OWN GAME.

XANADU SPREADS ITS WINGS LIKE SOME GREAT GRACEFUL BIRD...

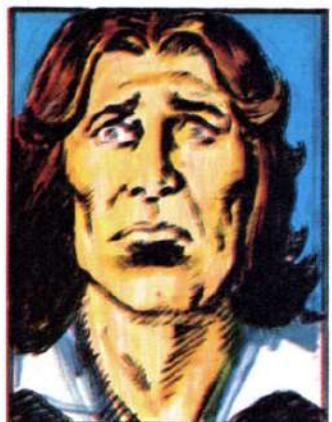
... AND SONNY MALONE IS SWEPT UP INTO HIS ULTIMATE FANTASY... HIS ULTIMATE DREAM...

... FOR SHE IS THERE... DANCING, SINGING, JUST FOR HIM...

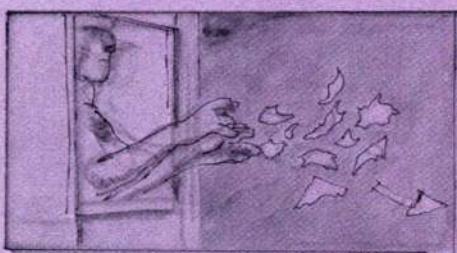
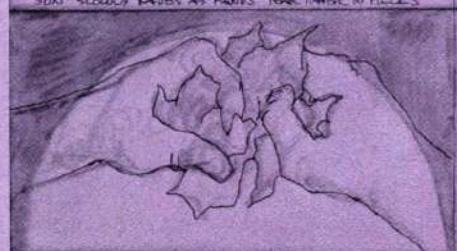
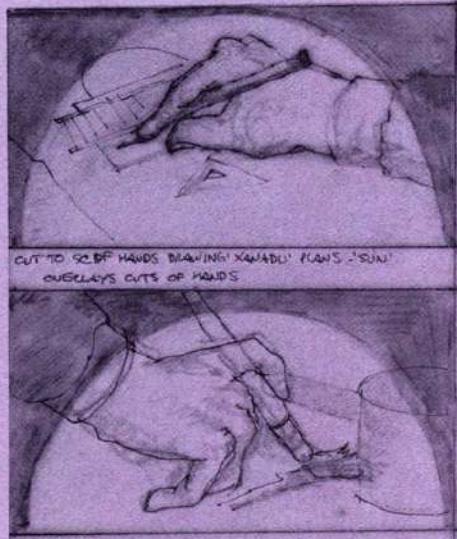
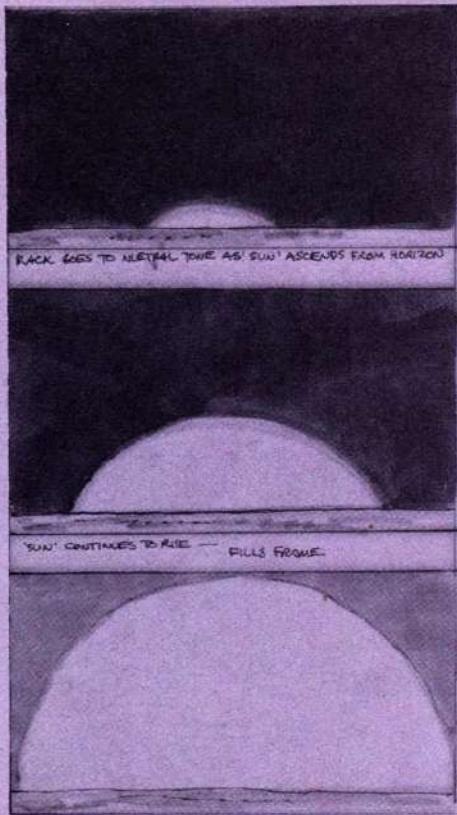


...IT SEEMS INEVITABLE THAT IT END...

...AS KIRA SOARS OFF IN A FLASH OF HOT FIRE...





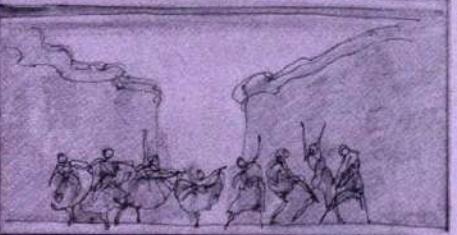
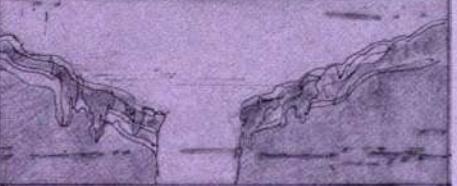
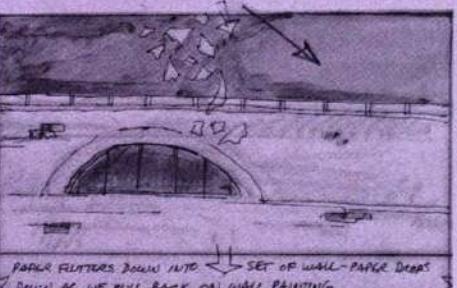
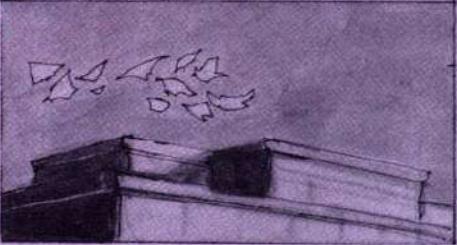
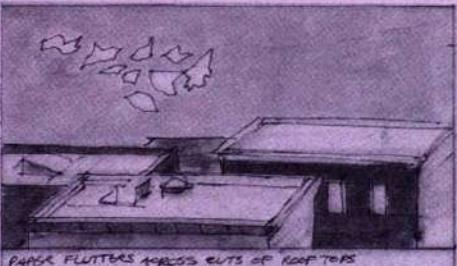


THE MAKING OF XANADU

We here at the Marvel Bullpen know as well as anybody the magic that a well told illustrated story is capable of generating. With *Xanadu* we had a great story to begin with. The hard part was in adapting it to a two-dimensional medium. And we think we've done a pretty good job of it. But proud as we are of what we've produced, how can we really recreate *Xanadu's* amazing choreography, music and acting in a comic magazine? And even special effects aren't as impressive on paper as they would be on a 60-foot-wide screen.

The magic of *Xanadu*, the film, lies in the skills of the dedicated artists both in front of and behind the camera and it is their work that the following section of the magazine highlights with articles, stills, and behind-the-scenes photos, all about this incredible collaboration of talents called *Xanadu*. Enjoy!

On this page are reproduced early storyboards for the film's opening. Careful pre-planning like this, all along the line, makes the final product look effortless.



I'M ALIVE

BIOGRAPHIES OF THE STARS AND CREATORS

By Scott Edelman

OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN

(Kira)

Can it really be possible that *Xanadu* is only Olivia Newton-John's second film? Even though she made her movie musical debut just two years ago in *Grease*, with all of the awards she's won, it seems as if she's been making beautiful music forever.

Olivia was born in Cambridge, England and raised in Melbourne, Australia. Both her father and grandfather are famous in their own fields — her father, as headmaster of Ormond College in Melbourne and her grandfather, Max Born, as winner of the *Nobel Prize for Physics* in 1954. With such remarkable forebears as these, it isn't surprising that Olivia has become one of the entertainment world's super-successes.

Olivia has been a dedicated performer since gradeschool, where she and three girl friends formed a group, the Sol Four. She gave it up when it began to interfere with her school-work, but by then she had learned what she wanted to do with her life. Instead of attending college, Olivia decided that she would pursue her music career full-time.

When she won a talent contest at the age of fifteen that had as its prize a trip to England, Olivia went and remained in England for two years. There she and Pat Carroll, another Australian girl, formed a duo and began to appear in cabarets and on BBC television. Even after her friend's visa expired, Olivia remained in England, recording her first single, her very personal version of Bob Dylan's *If Not For You*. It was to be but the first of many hits. In fact, her next single, *Banks Of The Ohio*, won her both an English Silver Disc and an American Gold Disc.

Her international prominence grew, winning Olivia her first Grammy as Best Country Vocalist in 1973 for her song *Let Me Be There*. In 1974 two more Grammys followed. In fact she has won eight American music



awards since 1974, garnering additional honors from *Billboard*, *Cashbox*, *Record World*, the Academy of Country Music, the Country Music Association, ASCAP, AGVA, and many, many others.

Some superstars find it difficult to combine heady stardom with a steady homelife. Not Olivia. She lives quietly in Malibu, California with a menagerie of six horses, four dogs, and two cats. As a child her love of animals was so great that she had considered becoming a veterinarian. Today her devotion to animals has led to her involvement in the fight to save endangered species. In fact, she once cancelled a Japanese concert tour to protest the killing of dolphins by Japanese fishermen, and

did not reschedule it until the Japanese government rectified the situation.

After a sold out concert tour of the United States, highlighted by her appearance at the New York City Metropolitan Opera House, Olivia began filming *Grease*, a movie that was to become the most successful musical film ever made.

Grease has broken box office records world-wide, grossing over 150 million dollars in international rentals alone. Vincent Canby of *The New York Times* said that her performance as Sandy was "very funny and utterly charming." The *Grease* soundtrack album was awarded multi-platinum honors, and Olivia's three releases from the film

were all certified gold and remained on the pop charts throughout 1978 — *You're The One That I Want*, *Summer Nights*, and *Hopelessly Devoted To You*.

Olivia next went on a concert tour of Japan, Australia, and Europe, while she tried to decide what to do next with her new-found film career. It took two years of script-reading before she discovered a project that captured her imagination — the musical-fantasy film, *Xanadu*. She immediately fell in love with the character of Kira, and was captivated by the concept.

In her first film a greaser — and in her second a goddess. Anything could be next for this blonde super-sensation!



GENE KELLY (Danny McGuire)

If you were asked to name the most famous movie musical dance numbers of all time, chances are they would feature Gene Kelly. Think of the sensual eroticism of his tradition-breaking seventeen minute ballet in *An American in Paris*, the wild exuberance of his umbrella dance in

Singin' In The Rain, the childlike innocence of his animated fantasy duet with the Terrytoon mouse, Jerry in *Anchors Aweigh*.

Now, to this list, add *Xanadu*.

Kelly was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he and his brother, Fred, worked their way through college playing amateur nights and touring small nightclubs. Kelly quickly

built up a local reputation and began choreographing shows and teaching dancing classes.

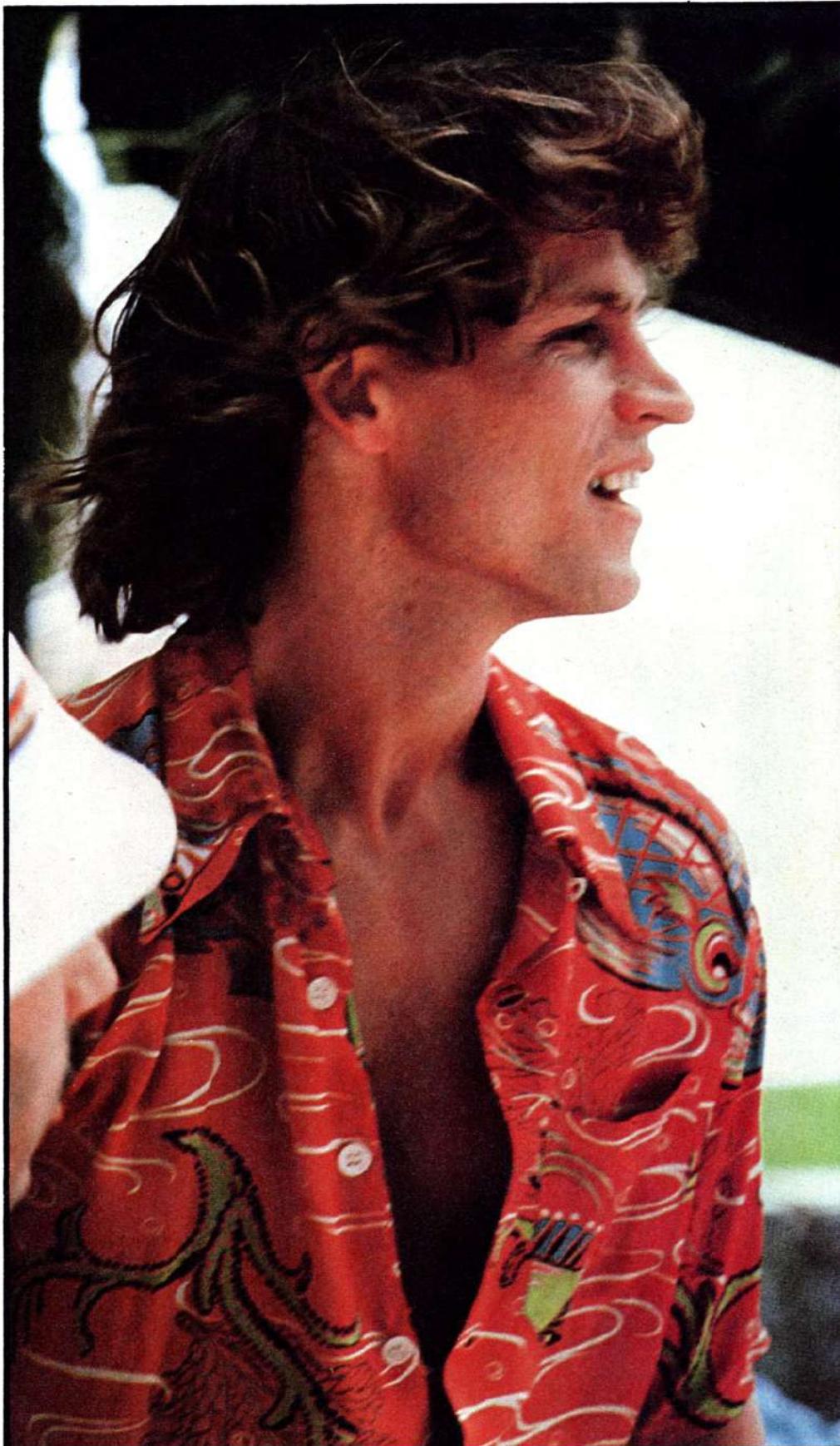
It wasn't until the summer of 1938 that Kelly tried his luck on the Great White Way, and Broadway was very receptive. A role in Cole Porter's *Leave It To Me* was quickly followed by *One For The Money* and *The Time Of Your Life*. He provided the foot-work for Billy Rose's famed night-spot, the Diamond Horseshoe, and the show, *Best Foot Forward*. Then Kelly became a real Broadway star in the Rodgers and Hart hit *Pal Joey*, and he was besieged by offers from Hollywood.

Kelly started at the top — co-starring with Judy Garland in MGM's *For Me And My Gal*. For a while he was loaned out to other studios — Columbia Pictures for *Cover Girl*, Universal for *Christmas Holiday* — until MGM decided that he was too valuable a box office property. Kelly went on to make a total of twenty-eight films for MGM.

As a tribute to Kelly's role in creating some of the greatest film musicals ever made — *On The Town*, *An American In Paris*, *It's Always Fair Weather*, *Anchors Aweigh*, *Summer Stock*, *Singin' In The Rain*, the list seems endless — in 1952, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences awarded him an Oscar "in appreciation of his versatility as an actor, singer, director, and dancer; and specifically for his brilliant achievements in the art of choreography on film."

But Kelly's talents never lay in his dancing feet alone. The versatile Kelly has starred in many dramatic and comedic films, like *The Black Hand*, *Marjorie Morningstar*, *Inherit The Wind*, *What A Way To Go*, *Forty Carats*, and the classic 1948 version of *The Three Musketeers*. He has proved his ability as a director of non-musical films with *The Happy Road* and *The Tunnel Of Love*, and later went on to direct *Gigot*, *A Guide For The Married Man*, *The Cheyenne Social Club*, and *Hello, Dolly!* Kelly co-narrated (with Fred Astaire) *That's Entertainment, Part II*, for which he directed new sequences. He even made a return to Broadway, directing the smash hit, *Flower Drum Song*.

Kelly's numerous television credits include *Playhouse 90*, *Going My Way*, *The Funny Side*, and countless specials.



Michael Beck.

Recently, Kelly has appeared live at Las Vegas' International Hotel with his own show, *Gene Kelly and His Wonderful World Of Girls*, and at Resorts International in Atlantic City, thus proving himself to be a jack of all trades — and a master of all!

MICHAEL BECK

(Sonny)

Beck tried out for his first acting role on a dare. A friend kidded him into reading for the part of Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet* at Millsap College, which Beck was attending on a football scholarship. Beck got the part — and football's loss has become the cinema's gain. Michael Beck has since proven himself to be one of America's most gifted young actors.

Beck was born in Memphis, Tennessee and raised, with his eight siblings, on a farm across the Mississippi at Horseshoe Lake, Arkansas.

Lance Goss, head of the Drama Department at Millsap College in

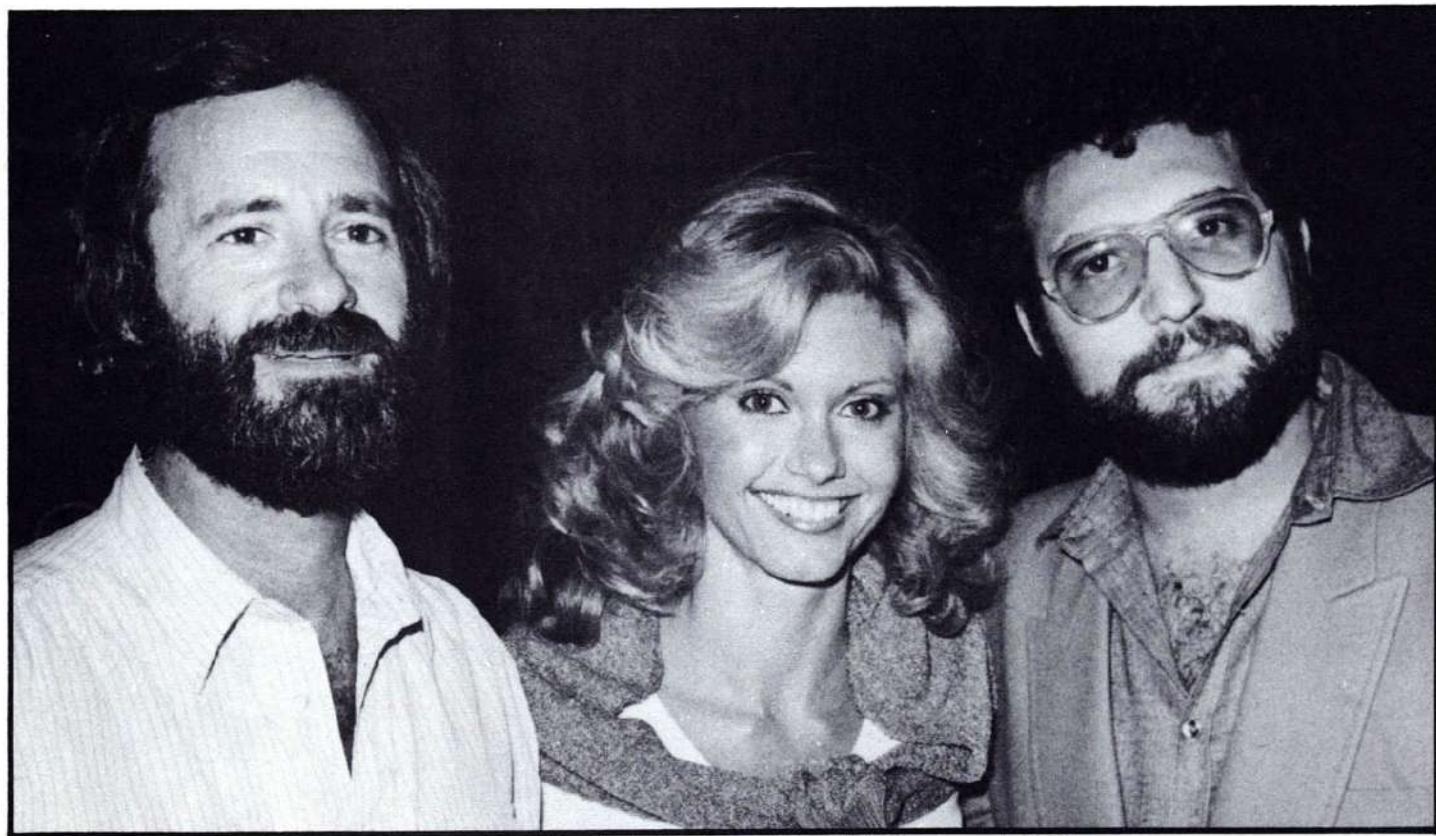
Jackson, Mississippi, encouraged Michael to pursue acting as a career and urged him to study in England. Beck took his advice and enrolled in London's Central School of Speech and Drama in 1971, where he eventually lost his Southern accent. After three years of training, Beck then spent two more years in England performing with an assortment of repertory companies.

After half a decade in Europe, Beck returned home, and in less than five weeks found that he not only had an agent, but also a leading role in *Madman*, an independent film which was being shot in Israel during the spring of 1977. Beck returned to New York, where he was almost immedi-

ately cast in the television mini-series *Holocaust*. So he was off to Europe again, this time for thirteen weeks shooting in Austria.

Beck finally got his chance to stay in the states for awhile when director Walter Hill and producer Lawrence Gordon cast him as the lead in *The Warriors*, where he delivered a dynamite performance in the controversial film. After appearing in *Mayflower: The Pilgrim Adventure*, a 1979 CBS-TV movie, with Anthony Hopkins, Beck was tapped for the romantic lead in *Xanadu*, his first musical role, but definitely destined not to be his last.

And to think it all started with a dare.



Producer Lawrence Gordon, Olivia Newton-John and Co-Producer Joel Silver.

LAWRENCE GORDON

(Producer)

Lawrence Gordon began his career in show business working with television producer Aaron Spelling on *Burke's Law*, the detective hit of the early sixties. Gordon then joined ABC television as head of West Coast Talent Development, afterwards moving to Screen Gems (now Columbia Pictures Television) where he became a vice president and worked on developing many new projects. One of these was *Brian's Song*, the popular and highly acclaimed

film which featured James Caan and Billy Dee Williams.

Gordon then became Vice President in Charge of World-Wide Production at American International Pictures, a position created there for him. The movies *Dillinger* and *Heavy Traffic* were among his successes there.

Three years later, he struck out on his own, forming Lawrence Gordon Productions, Inc. His new company's first film was *Hard Times*, and was followed by *Rolling Thunder*, *The Driver*, *The End*, *Hooper*, and *The Warriors*.

JOEL SILVER

(Co-Producer)

After working as assistant to Lawrence Gordon on *The End* and *Hooper*, Joel Silver acted as associate producer on *The Warriors*.

Silver next worked at Universal Pictures, where he became the executive in charge of *Smokey And The Bandit II* starring Burt Reynolds, Jackie Gleason and Sally Field, and *The Incredible Shrinking Woman* starring Lily Tomlin.

Silver is an old Technicolor movie musicals buff, and *Xanadu* is his loving tribute to them.



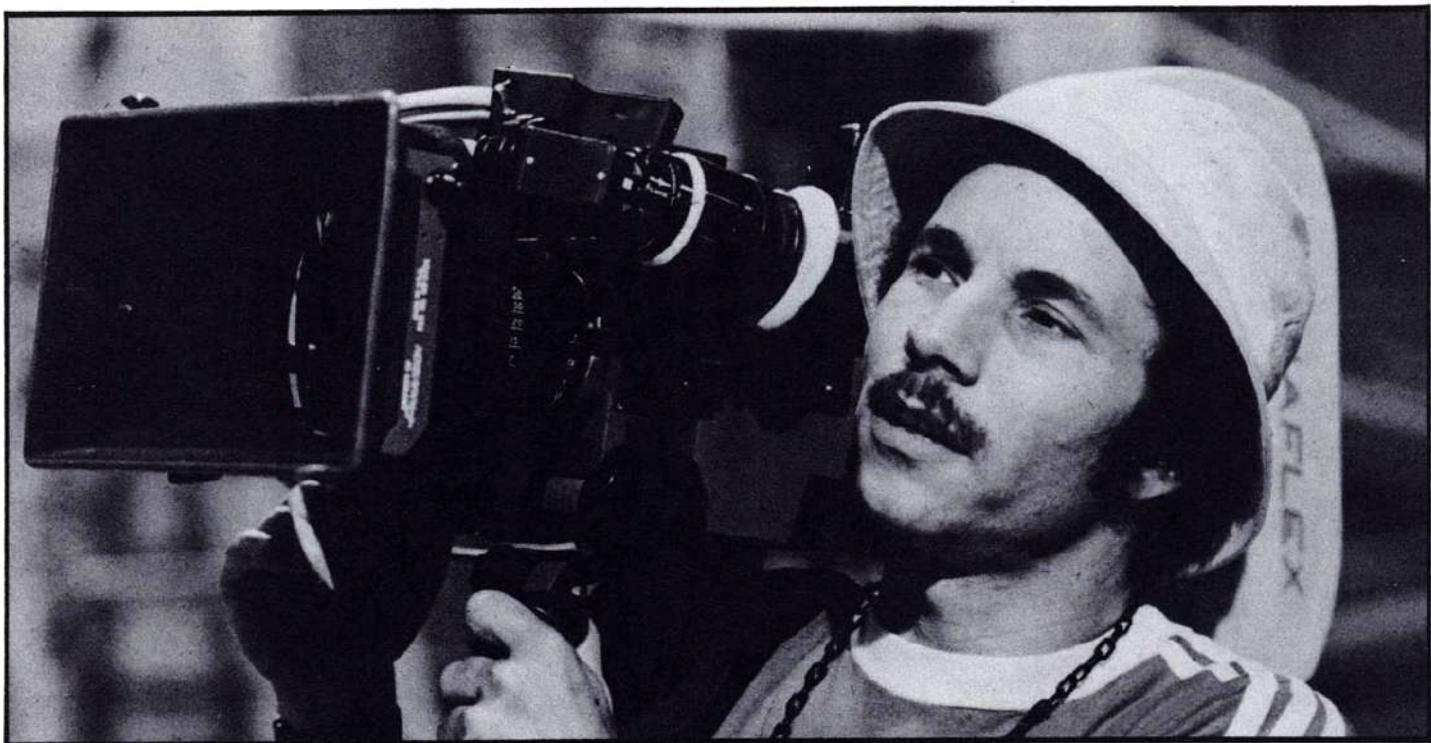
LEE KRAMER (Executive Producer)

Lee Kramer is not only a top-flight producer, but he has also farmed in Israel and Africa, is a full partner in the largest footwear supplier in Europe, has run an antique jewelry store, has managed the career of Olivia Newton-John for the past five years, and has his own production company, L. K. Productions. Whew!

Kramer has produced several of Olivia Newton-John's television specials, including *Hollywood Nights* for ABC-TV, which aired on this year's Oscar night.

No stranger to the world of *Marvel Comics*, Kramer is deeply involved in the production plans of the feature film version of *The Silver Surfer*, which is to begin shooting in early 1981.

Xanadu's Executive Producer, Lee Kramer (center, flanked by composer John Farrar and Michael Beck), is now hard at work on the film version of *The Silver Surfer*.



Director Robert Greenwald checks the camera angle during *Xanadu*'s filming.

ROBERT GREENWALD

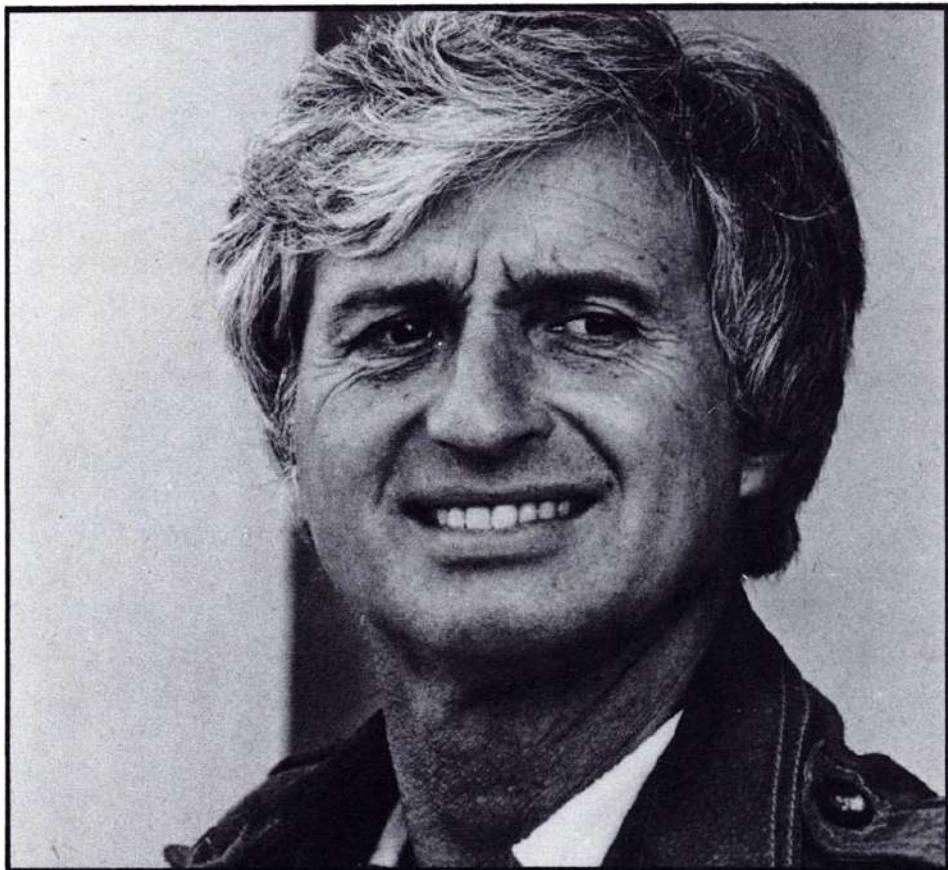
(Director)

Robert Greenwald is a native New Yorker who worked on more than thirty off-Broadway shows before coming to the attention of producer David Merrick, who hired him as assistant general manager. His work East netted him an offer to run the newly created play program at the Mark Taper Forum of The Los Angeles Music Center, where he directed twelve productions in under three years. One of these, *Me And Bessie*, was so successful a musical that it moved to Broadway for a year-and-a-half run. On Broadway he also directed Billy Dee Williams in *I Have A Dream*.

While at the Music Center, Greenwald became interested in film and with Frank von Zerneck started Moonlight Productions. Over the next three years he produced or directed fifteen specials, pilots, and movies for television, among them *Twenty Hours At Munich*, starring William Holden.

The three movies Greenwald directed for television were all well-received: *Katie: Portrait Of A Centerfold*; *Sharon: Portrait Of A Mistress*; and *Flatbed Annie & Sweetpie: Lady Truckers*.

Robert Greenwald is making his feature film directorial debut on *Xanadu*.



Victor J. Kemper, responsible for *Xanadu*'s spectacular cinematography.

VICTOR J. KEMPER

(Cinematographer)

Victor Kemper is a veteran cinematographer with a reputation for perfection. Among his credits are *The Last Of The Red Hot Lovers*, *The Reincarnation of Peter Proud*, ...And *Justice For All*, *Shamus, Oh, God!*, *The Last Tycoon*, *Magic*, and *Dog Day Afternoon*.



By Dan Fingeroth

There is a star in *Xanadu* who doesn't get billing along with Olivia Newton-John, Gene Kelly, and Michael Beck. This star is actually more of a "what" than a "who" and is, of course, the barrage of special effects which give this fantastic feature its magical, unearthly character.

and makes it the unique film experience it is. For *Xanadu* is a musical that is uniquely of the movies, influenced by the best of past and present genres. On the one hand, it is the modern-day descendant of the wonderful old Busby Berkeley musicals of the '30s and '40s where the

"impossible" was portrayed with so casual an air as to make its presentation doubly stunning, in which Berkeley created choreographies which existed only on film — which could never have been presented in a live setting.

The other side of *Xanadu's* family

MAGIC

THE SPECIAL EFFECTS STORY

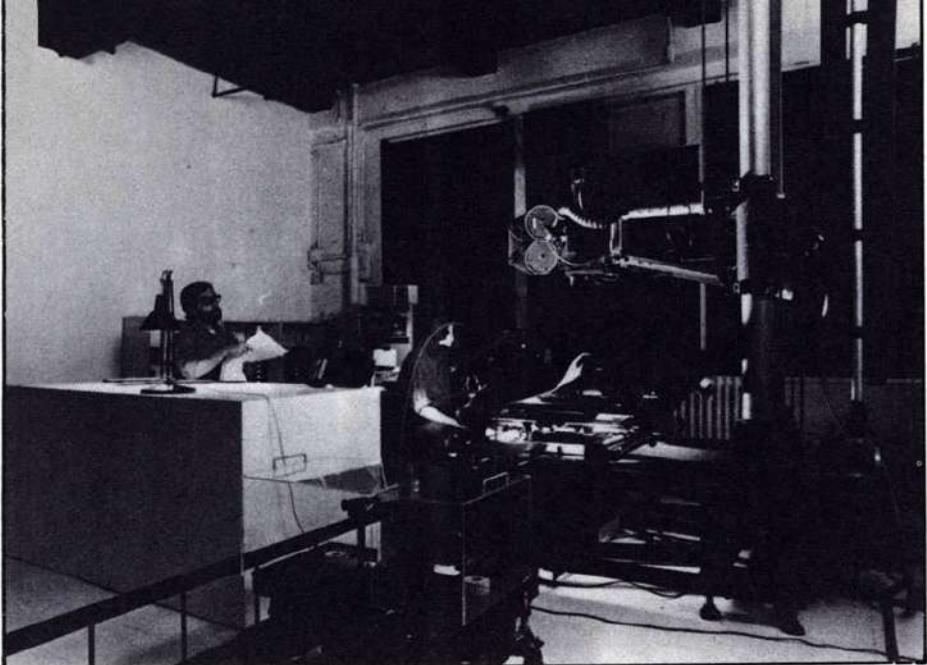


Olivia and the other muses change costumes in a flash of light-energy. The lighting effects are composed of many animated elements.

tree belongs to the technologically super-advanced cinema of the '60s and '70s beginning with *2001* and continuing through *Star Wars*, *Superman*, and *Star Trek*. *Xanadu* is no space opera nor is it a disaster film, though it is closely related to both genres, especially — through its

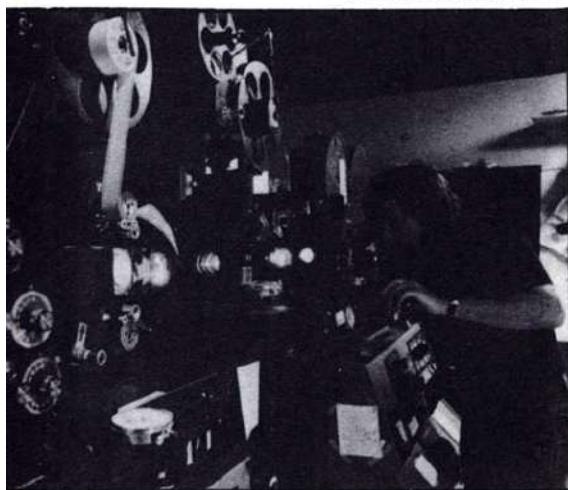
combinations of real and imagined events — to the latter. *Xanadu* is more of what you might call a *celebration* film. It leaves you singing, whistling, snapping your fingers and feeling hopeful about tomorrow, waiting for your own muse to descend on cue. All the elements —

the stars, the story, the music, the dance, and the effects — combine to treat your senses and lift your spirits. And if you're the curious type, you might be just a wee bit interested in how those effects came about. You might even be surprised to learn that, in the midst of all the obviously



R. Greenberg Associates' animation director Ken Stytzer and cameraman John Lindahl shooting one of *Xanadu*'s special effects sequences on the computerized animation stand.

Photo by Rudolph Janu



Joel Hynek, the Greenbergs' optical photography director, at work on the optical printer, a device which combines matted shots and creates special effects such as freeze-frames, accelerated motion and certain fades and dissolves.

unreal effects — a lot of things you thought were photographed from reality were also the result of technical tomfoolery.

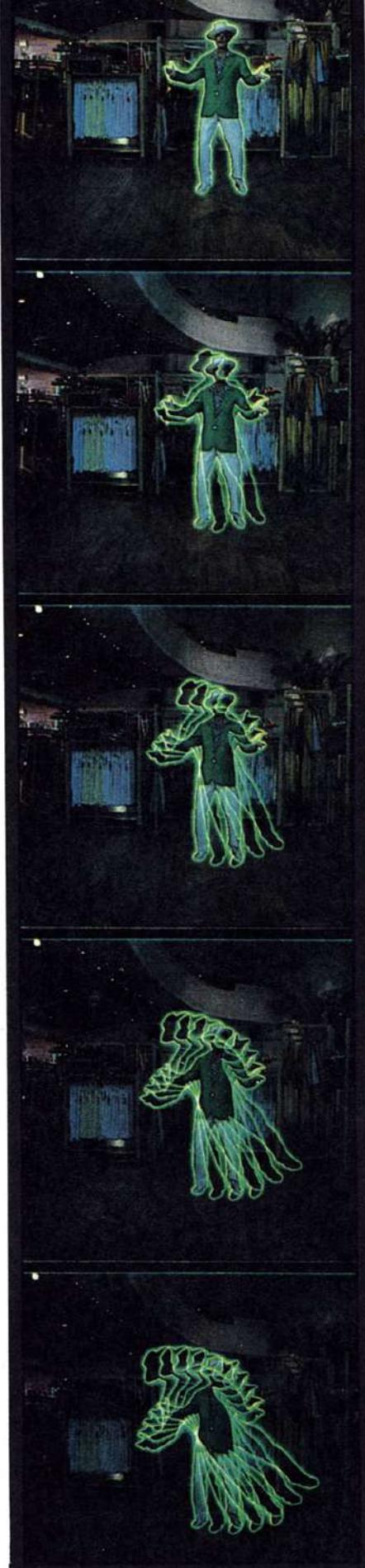
We went to the newly-expanded offices of R. Greenberg Associates on New York's Madison Avenue to meet the wizards behind *Xanadu*'s special brand of magic. Why, you may wonder, did a Hollywood-based project like *Xanadu* choose East coast special effects people? Easy. They wanted the best. And with the Greenbergs — whose credits include the breathtaking titles for *Superman — the Movie*, *All That Jazz*, *Alien*, and the upcoming *Flash Gordon* — they got them!

The Greenbergs (Richard, who handles much of the company's cre-

ative end, and his brother, Bob, who is more involved with the firm's day to day business affairs) and their small but dedicated staff, have just doubled the size of their quarters in this venerable Manhattan office building. The other tenants go about their humdrum office routines, little aware of the creative energy and craziness that pulsate through their neighbor's quarters. The high-ceilinged studios are painted a startling white that is anything but sterile looking. The offices have a friendly yet no-nonsense look, giving a visitor the accurate impression that the Greenbergs haven't even had time to enjoy their new space and equipment because of super-tight deadlines.

Although everyone there was most generous with his time, none of it was wasted for, even as we spoke with one person, everyone else kept their nose to whatever grindstone (or editing bench) they were supposed to be at. One lucky individual, animation director Ken Stytzer, was able to punch a program onto a computerized animation stand and chat while the device went about its job in a most eerie manner, raising and lowering its camera anywhere from four to eleven feet in height, clicking off frames, and moving again like a creature possessed of its own will.

In the course of our visit, we learned that *Xanadu*'s special effects may be roughly broken into two categories. First, there are the more traditional effects whose intent is to convince an audience that some-



Gene Kelly's aura is whirled and multiplied through a deft combination of rotoscoping (faithfully tracing a real-life image) and bottom lit animation.



*One of Xanadu's startling
scene transition devices.*

Robert and Richard Greenberg, the wizards behind Xanadu's array of special effects.

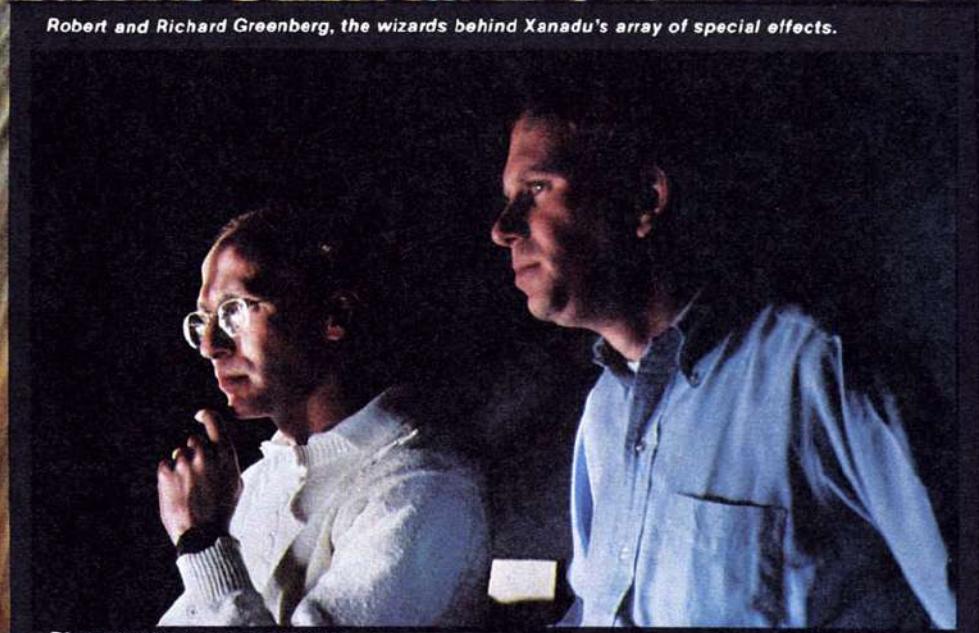


Photo by Gerhard Gscheidle



A muse comes to life while her sisters remain painted backgrounds.

thing fake is real. (For instance, the dead-end wall on which the mural of the muses is painted does not, in real life, stand in that spot. The wall was optically inserted into the middle of a street that actually goes on for many blocks beyond.) This is trickery in the tradition of, say, *The Sting*, which, using mattes and miniatures, recreated the Chicago of the 1930s.

Then there is the other variety of effects whose aim it is to dazzle, to boldly announce to you that you're being fooled, and goes ahead and draws you into the fantasy in spite of your knowledge. This — as you know if you've seen the film — is the predominant type of effect used in *Xanadu*, with the muses glowing and transforming themselves into beams of light; scenes slivering, tearing, and shimmering into other scenes; even non-magical Gene Kelly becoming a swirl of green (Kelly green?) light and more. Both hidden and self-proclaiming effects are used in *Xanadu* and both require extraordinary amounts of painstaking effort to produce.

All of *Xanadu*'s spectacular effects are the products of the imaginations of the Greenbergs, their staff, and their associates, in combination with the creative use of three filmmaker's tools: the anima-



Michael Beck trapped by a special effects force-field in heaven.

tion stand, the *optical printer*, and the *blue-screen matte system*. These, aided by computers which facilitate the execution of such exacting, repetitive work, are what give us the final product on the screen. (If technological jargon tends to intimidate you, just keep this in mind while you read about how the special effects were created: That as complex as an effect may appear on the screen, each element contributing to that complexity is as simple as possible in concept, if not in execution. What we finally see is the result of nearly perfect manipulation and combination of all these simple elements. The results of such combinations can be mind-boggling, but simplicity is the key to the achievement of complexity, for film is a child of a technologically simpler era (the late 19th century) and the complexities that comprise the effects can still only be filmed one frame at a time. When we talk about opticals, computers, and innovative animation techniques, keeping all this in mind can help clarify

things.)

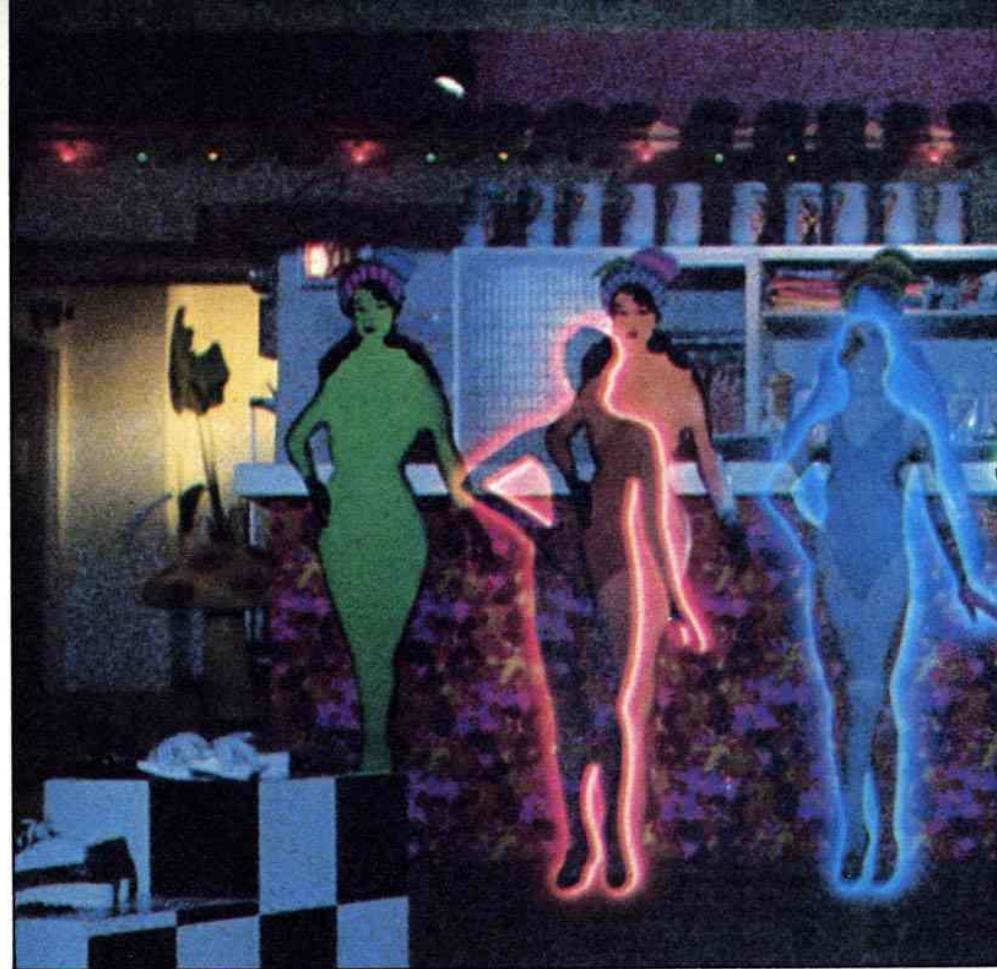
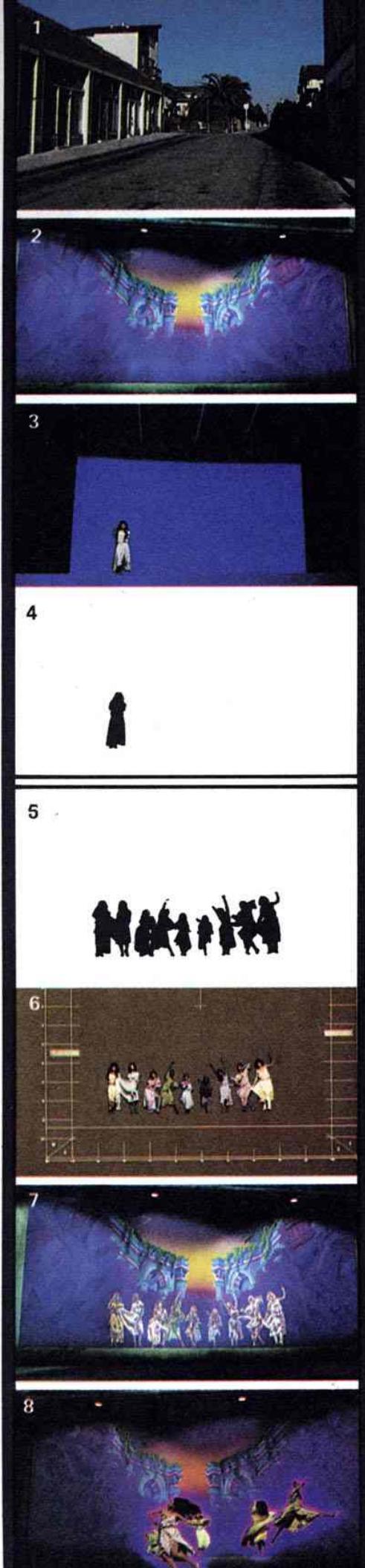
The *animation stand* is used to create the glowing, moving light effects such as the shimmer that surrounds the muses and into which the muses transform. These movements are different from ordinary cartoon animation which uses "cels" (transparent acetate sheets upon which are inked and painted figures in progressive stages of movement) in combination with relatively stationary backgrounds to create an illusion of "real" motion. "We don't use any traditional cel animation whatsoever," says Bob Greenberg. "We use a combination of bottom lit graphics, and computerized moves combined with live background scenes. Bottom lit graphics is just using the animation stand in a different way than full cel animation, which is top lit. Bottom lit means that the light is coming from below the artwork, which might be as little as a pin-hole or a line in an opaque sheet of paper, and you're using gels, kodaliths, transparencies to alter the

nature of the light." In *Xanadu*, this bottom lit artwork is used in conjunction with live action, and it is this bottom lighting technique which accounts for the unique glowing quality of the film's effects. Also, instead of all the action being composed at one time on the animation stand, the animation here may be constructed of many elements from many sources. This necessitates separate artwork and separate shots for each component of an effect. The parts of the effect are combined on an optical printer and the printer is then used again to combine the effects with the live action they are to enhance.

"The camera is really where the movement takes place as opposed to the artwork," continues Greenberg. "So the artwork may be just one element or it may be a tremendous number of elements but what's happening is there's an enormous amount of complexity going on, and it's in the camera itself so that the camera may be taking five frames, capping, and going back. We're layer-

The muses' simple-looking glows are actually the result of careful combination of many animated layers.





ing images onto film. We're continuously going back and forth within the same frame... The control you have, to do things in-camera, to go continuously back-and-forth on the same frame isn't really exploited in cel animation, which is more or less straightforward camera shooting. The complexity *there* is in the planning, the drawing, the inking, and the painting."

Mattes are a very interesting and vital part of the special effects process. They have been used, in one form or another, from the first days of cinema to their incredibly sophisticated present-day version. A matte is used when a filmmaker wants to combine two separate elements that are not found in one place or to conceal an area of the frame he doesn't

The "come-alive" wall sequence: 1) Street upon which painting was matted. 2) Wall-painted background over which the individual paintings of the muses will be placed. 3) Single muse against blue-screen background. 4) Black core matte of muse which will hold back light from area of the frame where the painted (or, later, live) muse will appear. 5) Black core matte of all the muses. 6) Muses alone against a field guide used in the optical printer to assure matting accuracy. 7) Wall painting with three of the muses laid over it. 8) Muse leaves painting and enters street.

want the camera to see. It's what enables optical effects to work as composite shots and not appear simply as double-exposures or some other type of mistake. A matte will block out the extraneous details in a shot so that only the element desired will be exposed on the film, and the rest of the frame will remain untouched by light for that particular moment.

Some of the most complex matting is done in the sequence near the film's beginning where the muses on the wall painting come to life. If you think it was tough to do, you're right. "What we did," related Richard Greenberg, who actually designed and oversaw the shooting of many of the sequences involving the more complex effects, "was photograph each girl separately against a blue background." (This process is known as *blue-screen matting* and is the standard matting procedure when a situation calls for making people or objects seem to move across — as opposed to adjacent to — a given background when the scene is impossible to shoot "in nature.") "You make sure that they're not wearing any blue. And then the blue will drop away through color separation and you're left with just the woman



Glow effect replaces cut-outs with real dancers in Fiorucci scene.

without any background. Then each one of those dancers was recombined with the *inserted* background. In other words, we took the dance sequence and were able to deal with each dancer as a separate element, actually build up a choreography that didn't exist in the original photography because we were able to change where one thing came in as opposed to another. Then, after they had been recombined, we projected their images life-size onto a wall, and painted the mural from the projection ...it was a very, very tedious process." The mural was then optically combined with the live dancers who seemed to, one by one, come to life, and with the glows that surrounded the muses as they began to move and dance.

Another care-laden special effect of note is in the scene where Kira first sets out after Sonny in the park. At one point in her chase she (or rather, the flash of light which represents her) rounds a tree, a simple-looking maneuver. But — in case you've never tried — it's incredibly difficult, from an aesthetic point of view, to do such an off-axis movement when mixed with live-action. The path of the bending light must

appear as natural as would that of any object rounding the tree. In the words of Ken Stytzer, "We busted our brains on that one!"

Okay, so now you know a little about how everybody appeared and disappeared, got to glowing and spinning, but here's a little effect that probably had you fooled all along, one of those "old-fashioned" effects we mentioned earlier, spruced up, of course, with modern ingredients. It involves *Xanadu*, the club itself. The hall's exterior isn't a papier-mâché mock-up on a back lot. No, it's a real building — the Pan-Pacific Auditorium in Los Angeles, a 1940s art deco classic, now abandoned. You might guess that the producers had to do a lot of work to *glitz* it up, right? Wrong — well, sort of. They did do a lot of work but *not* on the building itself. If you go to the Pan-Pacific today, you'll see the same wreck that Sonny hitched a ride to. How was the renovation done? According to Stytzer, "The building was shot onto live-action film. From that clip, we took the negative and made a huge color print and from the



The Auditorium before...



...and after its transformation into Xanadu.



As Olivia sings, the muses dance...



...then turn to light...



...which lifts off the platform...



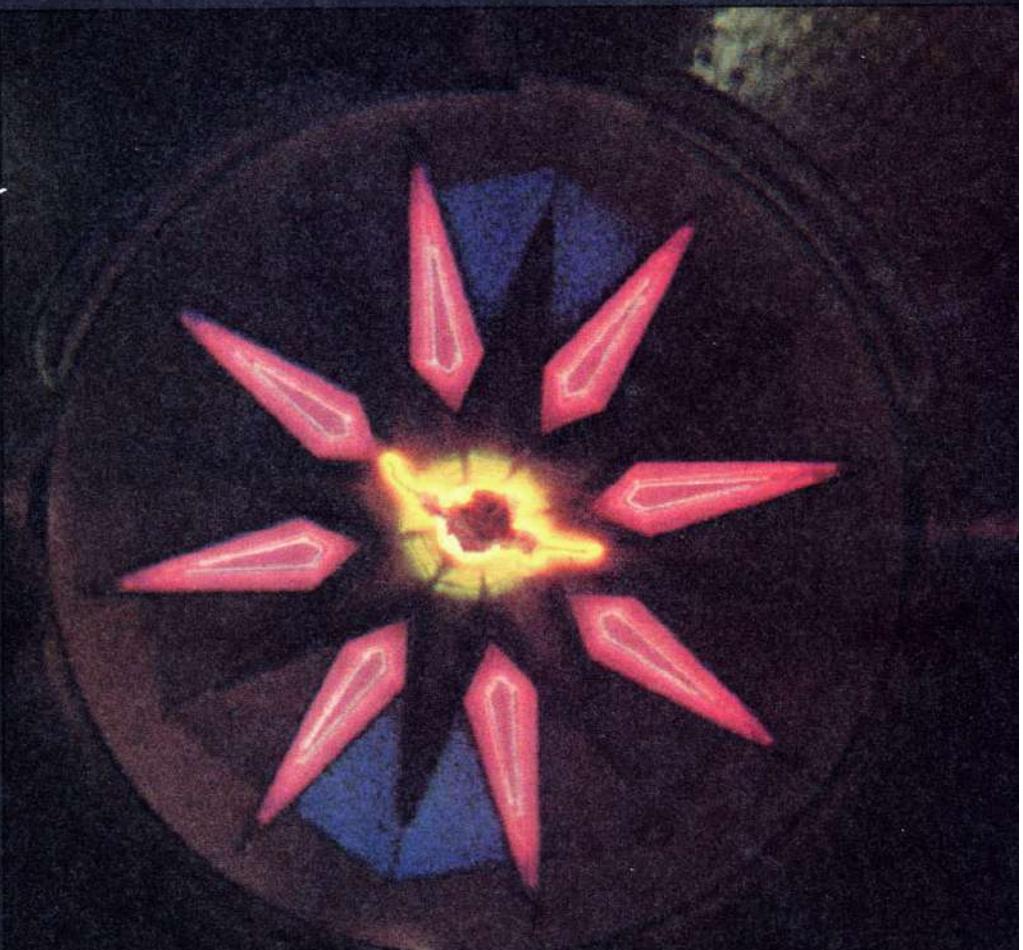
...as Olivia is surrounded by an animated glow...

...and prepares for her own lift-off.

print, the *Xanadu* building was constructed by airbrush and retouching, getting rid of all the cracks and crevices, removing extraneous background details, and putting in additional pieces of architecture. And then from that a transparency was made, and from the transparency, various segments of that building were broken down and effects created," the most striking being the pulsing neon trim added with bottom-lit animation tricks. When live action — such as Sonny and Kira dancing in front of the building — was called for, it was simply (or not so simply) blue-screened and optically placed in front of the "imaginary" renovation.

And, going from the sublime to the ridiculously simple, in the final scenes of the muses again transmogrifying into streaks of light, all the movie makers had to do to achieve the ladies' physical disappearance was stop the camera, yell "Muses off the set!" and start the film rolling again, leaving Kira there all by herself. It's surprising anybody remembered how to do anything that simple. (The shot was later complicated on the optical bench with tricky dissolves and animated lighting effects, but it would've been impossible without this simple foundation).

But before the effects, the music, the costumes... before anything at all appears on your screen, there is an inspiration, a creative spark which demands to be brought to life. As



Ken Stytzer says, "You have an idea of what it should look like — and you just go ahead and do it." That could be the motto of the entire Greenberg organization, and, for that matter, of *Xanadu* itself. And who knows, maybe it was even inspired by one very special gal — the muse of special effects herself.

If *Xanadu* or this article whetted your appetite for a more in-depth study of the film's special effects, then you're in luck. The Greenbergs themselves are writing an article on that very topic which will tell, in their own words, just what went into the creation of *Xanadu*'s amazing visuals. Their piece will appear in the August issue of *American Cinematographer*. Don't miss it.

—DF



Sonny and Kira as cartoon characters.

XANIMATION

XANADU'S FANTASY-WITHIN-A-FANTASY

By Dan Fingeroth

There are 3,048 frames in *Xanadu's* fully animated *Don't Walk Away* sequence and each one is a work of art in itself. When you realize that all those frames go by in a little over two minutes, you begin to appreciate the fascination — and occasional frustration — that animation holds for its practitioners. *Xanadu* is loaded with animated special effects (as described elsewhere in this magazine) but only in this short section is full cel animation utilized. We're not seeing reality combined with animated effects but a real honest-to-Walt cartoon.

This fully animated sequence becomes as integral a part of the film as the live-action sequences and it establishes, in a way that no "real" action could, Sonny and Kira's love. In the winding course of the cartoon, the two change from their human forms into fireworks, fish, birds, a whirlwind and dixie-dust and yet somehow retain their own distinct personalities in each guise. The unifying theme of Sonny

constantly in pursuit of the uncatchable Kira, yet never giving up his dream no matter where the chase may lead is stated throughout. And in the end, his persistence is rewarded, a subtle foreshadowing of the ending of the larger film.

The animated sequence incorporates the sparkling look of the live sections' special effects to duplicate their magical feeling. The visual theme of characters constantly changing from one form into another and traveling from one exotic locale to another in a swirl of glitzy glitter is also picked up and amplified in this fantasy-within-a-fantasy. And every movement of the animation is perfectly synched-up to the rhythms of *Don't Walk Away*, so that the cartoon is not just artistically stunning but is also a remarkable achievement in the animator's craft, for the music was not adapted to the visuals as is usually the case in cartoons. Instead, the action was pre-planned to the frame to bring to life the emotions conjured up by the lyrics, melody, tempo and arrangement of the music.



Sonny (top) and Kira as highly recognizable animated fish.



Sonny (top) and Kira as highly recognizable animated fish.

When *Xanadu*'s producers decided they wanted one section of their film to go through the fantasy/reality world they had created into one of pure illusion, they took their idea to *Don Bluth Productions* where Bluth himself (who directed and did the story-boarding), Dorse Lampher (who created the animation's special-effects), and Gary Goldman and Fred Craig (who supervised the actual shooting of the segment) gave them a final product they could all be proud of. Bluth Productions, only in existence since last September, is made up of some of Hollywood's most highly regarded animators and, in this short time, has already produced the animated featurette called *Banjo the Woodpile Cat* and are at work (in association with Aurora Productions) on an animated feature, *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH*, based on the 1973 Newberry Award-winning book. The Bluth organization came up with their knockout interpretation of *Don't Walk Away* and in so doing made the love story of Sonny and Kira that much richer for all of us.

Animation Director Don Bluth (left) and Special Effects Animator Dorse Lampher discuss the animation's underwater effects.



Animation Camera Operator Charles Warren (left) and Directing Animator Gary Goldman double check exposure sequence of the underwater scene.



Special Effects Inking Artist Virginia Lewis at work.



DANCIN' AND MUSIC, TOO!

By Martin A. Jackson

The Battle of the Bands explodes into joyous celebration.



The generations roll along, new faces and new styles replace the old, but some very special forms of music go on forever.

American swing and big band tunes seem as fresh today as they were when Franklin Roosevelt sat in the White House and newspapers cost three cents. People still dance to the music of Glenn Miller and sway to the best of Benny Goodman's matchless ensemble.

The music of the 1980s — rock, disco, New Wave — comes from a more frenetic time, a less mellow place. Is it possible for these two very different styles to meet on common ground? Can the dance riffs of the '40s find a kinship with the electric rock of the '80s? In *Xanadu* they can. And do.

Xanadu is a movie about dancing, about music, about two generations of songs that, thanks to the skills of its superior cast and crew, magically prove how timeless good music really is. Olivia Newton-John, Gene Kelly and Michael Beck are remarkably talented performers. And behind the scenes are the no-less-talented composers, choreographers and craftspeople who brought a world to pulsing, colorful, fun-filled life. *Xanadu* is a musical dream, a film fantasy presented with all the verve that has long made Hollywood a synonym for enchantment. Producer Lawrence Gordon and co-producer Joel Silver assembled a cast that worked together harmoniously and, together with director Robert Greenwald, created a musical that ranks with the best from Hollywood's Golden Age.

In *Xanadu*, Ms. Newton-John is given a difficult assignment — she plays Kira, one of the Greek muses who visits this mortal plane to grant the wishes of two men. One of them is Sonny Malone, played by Michael Beck — a contemporary youth on the fringes of show business. His job is painting billboards, reproducing record album covers for advertising on a grand scale. He feels unsatisfied, yearns for something more from life, wonders if there even is more. The lovely muse, Kira, brings him the possibility of love, of fulfillment, of dreams made real.

The other is Danny McGuire (Gene Kelly), a successful, retired businessman who longs to return to those happy times back in the '40s when he was a jazz musician, owned a small

nightclub, and felt like he owned the world. An impossible dream, of course. So the discontented McGuire plays his clarinet on a lonely beach and spins his tales for the dubious benefit of a generation that cares little about the age when Swing was King. Then he meets the ravishing Kira, who embodies the dreams of his youth and, more, has the power to make his dreams, as well as Sonny's, come true. And it is this timeless myth of a muse and those she touches that inspired the music and dance of *Xanadu*.

Two major contemporary composers, John Farrar and Jeff Lynne, shared the musical chores on *Xanadu*. Farrar, who has been Olivia Newton-John's record producer since 1970, has also written some of her biggest hits, including the Oscar-nominated, certified platinum single *Hopelessly Devoted To You* and *You're The One That I Want* from *Grease*. Now he has penned five original compositions for *Xanadu*.

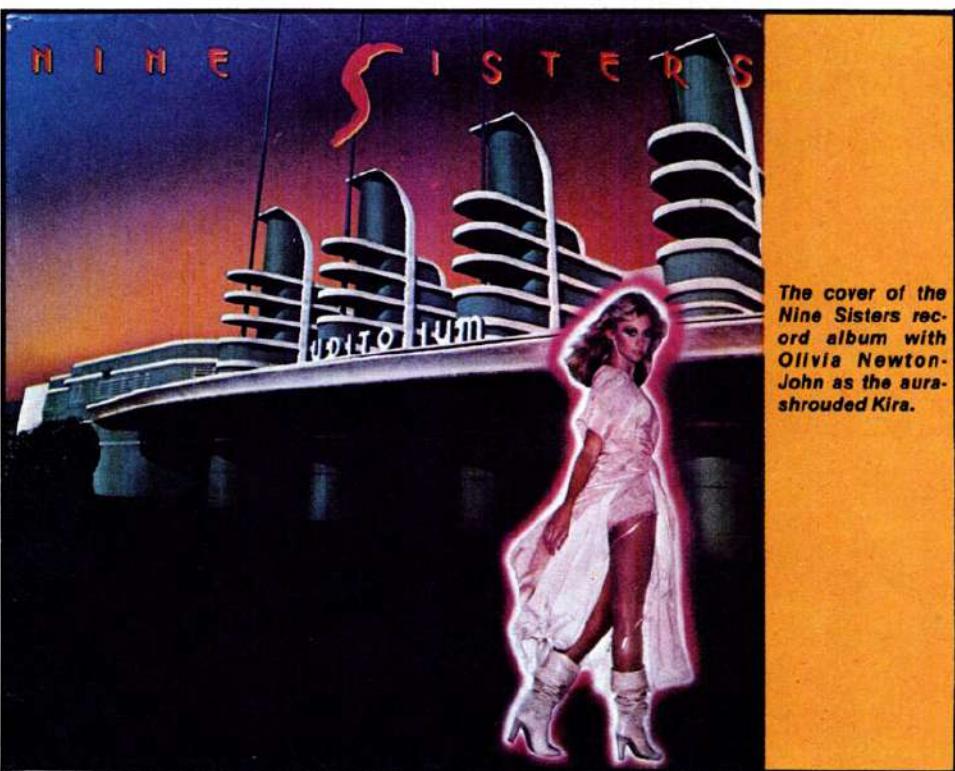
For Farrar, the road to Hollywood began in Australia when, as a twelve-year-old, he began studying guitar. By the time he was 19, Farrar and his group, The Strangers, were the featured house band on *The Go Show*, Melbourne's version of *American Bandstand*, providing backup and arrangements for guest artists. It was there that he met Olivia Newton-John.

In 1970, Farrar and his wife, Pat Carroll (who once sang with Olivia in England as part of the duo, Pat and Olivia) moved to England. There, Farrar helped form the trio, Marvin, Welch and Farrar and co-produced their first album.

John and Bruce Welch also co-produced Newton-John's first record. Their first single, a Bob Dylan tune, *If Not For You*, was a hit in the U.S. and England in 1971. Farrar began producing Olivia's records on his own in '72, where his steady hand in the production booth led *If You Love Me, Let Me Know* to certified platinum. Farrar received a Grammy as producer of *I Honestly Love You*.

The successes continued. The albums *Have You Never Been Mellow* and the *Grease* soundtrack each went multi-platinum. Certified platinum were the albums *Clearly Love*, *Come On Over*, *Olivia Newton-John's Greatest Hits* and *Totally Hot*.

Farrar moved to Los Angeles in 1977, after having toured the States with Olivia the previous year. Apart from writing and producing some five original songs for *Xanadu* — *Magic*, *Suddenly*, *Dancin'*, *Suspended In Time* and *Whenever You're Away From Me*, as well as some striking incidental music for the film, Farrar has also written and produced his own solo album as a songwriter/performer, scheduled for release by CBS Records this year.



The cover of the Nine Sisters record album with Olivia Newton-John as the aura-shrouded Kira.

John is becoming increasingly interested in the film world which he finds exciting and challenging. "Working on *Xanadu* was a frantic experience," said Farrar. "The music guided the plot. I'd meet with the producer and choreographer and they'd tell me what they had in mind, and then I'd write a song for it. Everything had to amplify the story, of course." For instance, the muse Kira's efforts to return to earth are concluded as Newton-John sings, *Suspended In Time*. "I think I like *Suddenly* most," Farrar said. "Olivia and Michael skating through the deserted recording studio with lots of special effects. It came out very well." And Farrar, not surprisingly, echoes the admiration everyone who worked on the film seems to feel for Newton-John, "She just gets more professional each time."

But there is more to *Xanadu*'s music than Farrar's melodies. This is a film musical with all the sparkle of the classic Hollywood show spectacles. Sharing the musical honors with Farrar is one of the very big names of modern popular music: Jeff Lynne, the engine that drives that unforgettable rock group, The Electric Light Orchestra.



Co-choreographer Kenny Ortega and Olivia run through a dance routine.

Olivia and the muses put on a once-in-a-lifetime show for the opening night crowd at Xanadu.



KENNY ORTEGA

(Co-choreographer)

Kenny Ortega entered the world of dance at age four, studying tap, jazz, ballet, acrobatics, and flamenco. While still in his teens, Ortega joined the San Francisco company of *Hair*. He has choreographed many musicals for the stage, including local productions of *Mame* and *Finian's Rainbow*, which he also directed.

Ortega is a rock 'n' roll dance specialist who found his niche in life when he met The Tubes, a rock group featured in *Xanadu*, and spent three years staging their act and performing with them. He worked with Toni Basil, the Rock 'N' Roll Dance Queen, who asked him to direct her show, *Follies Bizarre*, and eventually did choreography for Cher, Raquel Welch, Bette Midler, Ethel Merman, and Kiss.

Ortega's first film was *The Rose*, on which he acted as assistant choreographer to Toni Basil for the rock sequences. *Xanadu* is not the first time he has worked with Olivia Newton-John. He choreographed her numbers in her recent television special *Hollywood Nights*.



Co-choreographer Jerry Trent (left) and his assistant, Bob Thompson, show Olivia and Co. how it's done.

JERRY TRENT

(Co-choreographer)

Jerry Trent was born in Danville, Illinois, where he began tap and acrobatic lessons at the age of seven. He soon added ballet and jazz classes.

Trent came to New York and made his stage debut in *West Side Story* at the Paper Mill Playhouse, followed by *Camelot* on Broadway. He danced numerous times on live television, including performances on *The Bell Telephone Hour* and *The Ed Sullivan Show*.

Trent went west to Los Angeles and soon found himself dancing in such films as *Sweet Charity*, *Hello Dolly!*, *Funny Lady*, *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* and *Mame*.

Feeling limited as solely a dancer, Trent decided to move on to choreography. He assisted Onna White on *Pete's Dragon*, Marc Breaux on *Sextette*, and Michael Kidd on *Movie, Movie*. He has also worked with Joey Heatherton, Bert Convy, and Ginger Rogers as assistant choreographer on their night club acts.



Olivia and Gene dance to *Whenever You're Away From Me*.

of Chuck Berry's rock 'n' roll classic, *Roll Over Beethoven*, pushed ELO to the top of the charts and the heights of audience popularity. They followed up in the next few years with *Strange Magic*, *Evil Woman*, and *Telephone Line*, songs that remain classics to this day. The gold and platinum albums by ELO emerged in a steady stream during the 1970s,

and Jeff Lynne, lead vocalist and guitarist for the group, joined the ranks of super-stars. Fans still remember the epochal 1978 North American tour, during which ELO rolled out a space ship on stage, shooting smoke and fire and revealing the band working away in the nose cone. It was the sort of razzle-dazzle that makes ELO a theatrical experience.

ELO, as it quickly became known, had some new ideas, often inspired by Lynne. Why, he asked, shouldn't a band give a show as well as play music? Not just a few costumes and weak jokes, but a full blown all-electric killer of a stage performance that would fill the auditorium with lights, sound, special effects and, of course, top flight music.

1972 was the real birth date of ELO in the United States. Their first big hit, based with considerable nerve on Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* by way



Michael, Gene, and Olivia camp it up at a clothing boutique.

In *Xanadu*, his first movie assignment, Lynne takes his experience with ELO and applies it to the screen. What emerges will shake the theatres and leave the audiences roaring for more. Just as ELO, a world class rock band, is more than a musical group, so too Lynne's music for *Xanadu* is more than just rock... it is a total experience. The title tune, *Xanadu*, is Lynne's work, as are four other songs: *I'm Alive*, *Don't Walk Away*, *The Fall* and *All Over The World*.

The combination of Farrar's more romantic, mainstream melodies and Lynne's hard-driving, eye-popping rhythms will offer something to every movie-goer. Their virtuoso score makes *Xanadu* a musical extravaganza from opening credits, through the sensational Battle of the Bands, to the spectacular finale.

Magic is the keyword in *Xanadu*. Early in the film, the nine muses — sister goddesses of learning and the

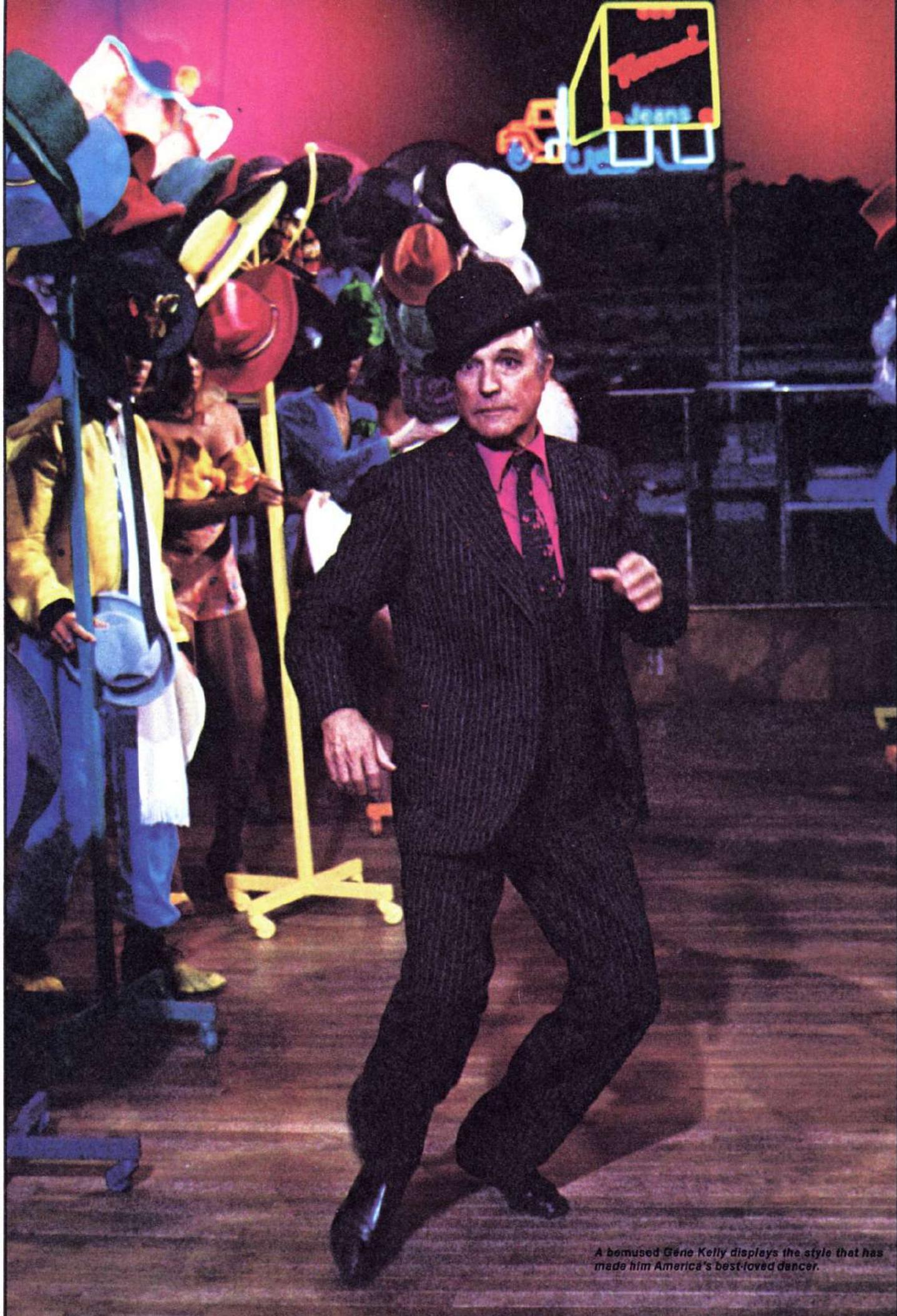
arts in Greek mythology — magically step out of a painted mural, to the soaring beat of Jeff Lynne's *I'm Alive*. It is a full scale ELO-style production, and we watch enthralled as the muse Kira takes mortal form, an embodiment of timeless beauty, and begins her mission on Earth. Kira and Sonny meet in a lovely fleeting moment. Kira pauses to kiss the young man, and then disappears. He finds her again in a deserted auditorium, and the two share the magic of new love to the music of *Magic*, a Farrar composition.

The story reaches its climax in the newly created nightclub called *Xanadu*. Gene Kelly's wish for a 1940s nightclub complete with big band and Michael Beck's vision of an electrified rock palace are both realized in one magical club where dreams come true. Kira grants both of them their wishes and the audience is treated to a lavish finale.

Kenny Ortega is one of *Xanadu*'s choreographers, and the man largely responsible for this lavishness. He, too, has happy memories of Olivia Newton-John. "She was an angel to work with," says Ortega, who still chuckles, months after the film was done, at the sheer enjoyment of making *Xanadu*.

"I don't think people realize how good Olivia Newton-John is," he said, "she's very trusting, she learns quickly."

Jerry Trent, co-choreographer for the film, marvelled at Newton-John's quickness and her willingness to learn the intricate dance routines. "She's a lady all the way," said Trent, who helped teach both Olivia and costar Michael Beck how to move for the cameras. Neither Beck nor Olivia are trained dancers but, added to Olivia's natural good humor (something that everyone connected with the movie seemed to remember) was Beck's natural athletic skill. "They



A bemused Gene Kelly displays the style that has made him America's best-loved dancer.



The Battle of the Bands in full swing. Look out!

wanted us to use doubles," Trent said, "but I said no. Even though Olivia and Michael had never skated before, we went ahead with them live. We wanted to catch that feeling of innocence, and that's something a slick professional double would have lost for us."

The real test for Ortega, though, came with the eye-filling *Battle of the Bands*, where the 1940s and the 1980s are put on display and ultimately joined. Literally joined — the two stages, one with a tuxedo-clad swing band and girl singers, the other with the neon and glitter rock band The Tubes, with their electronic dazzle, are slowly slid together until the screen is filled with an impossible mix of mid-'40s jitterbuggers and wild-haired punk rockers. Only in Hollywood. Ortega remembers some of the tricky moments in staging that number. "It was hard to get the platforms to roll smoothly; every once in a while they jerked and one of the

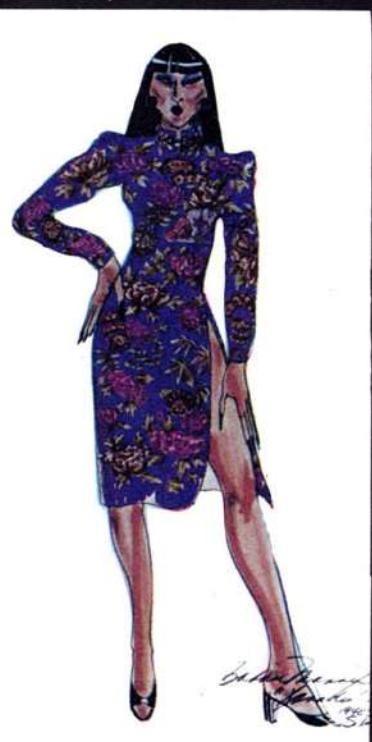
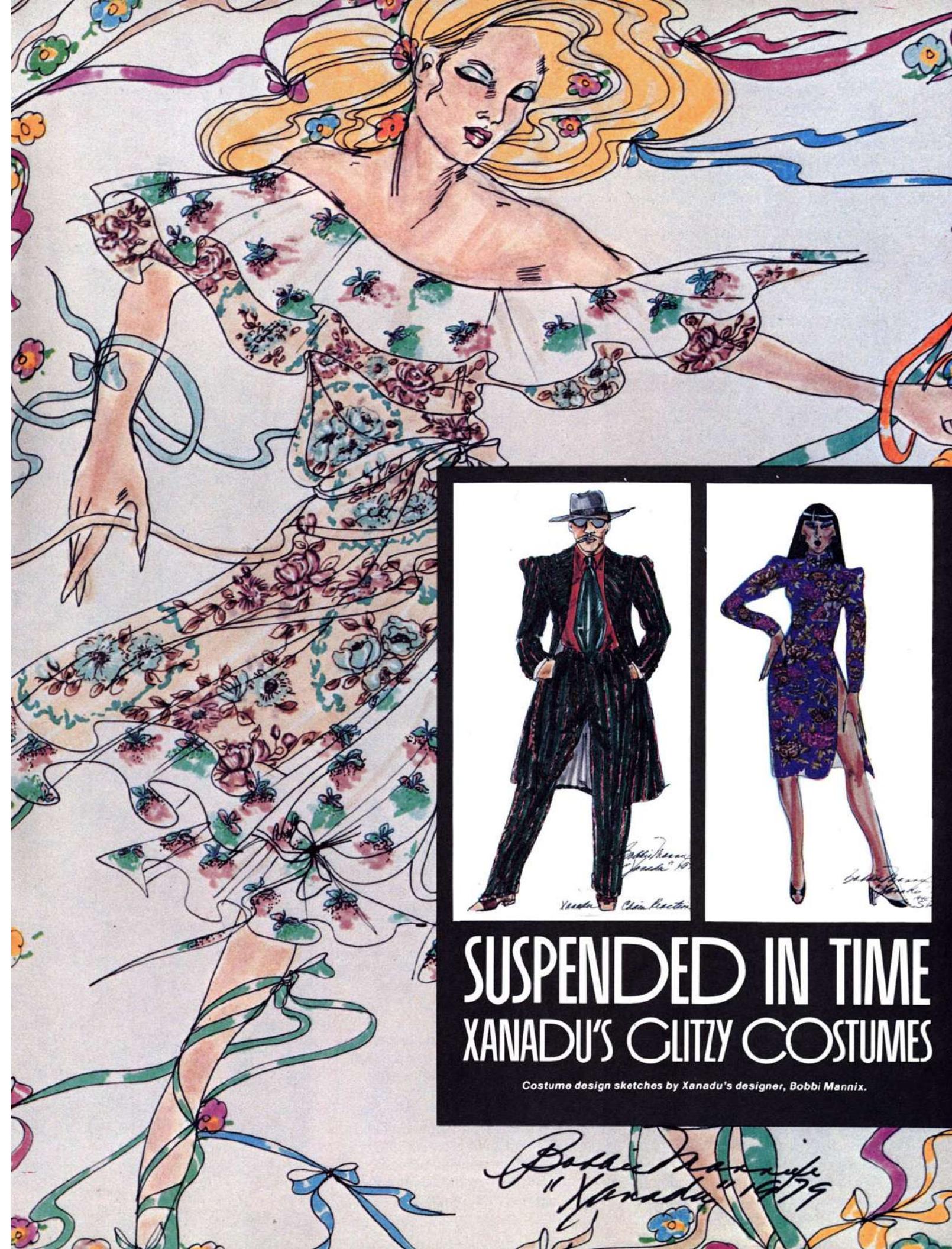
dancers fell off — but nobody ever got hurt.

"The *Battle of the Bands* was more than just color and sound, however. We wanted to show how the energy of rock music was similar to the '40s jitterbugging. In both styles, the tempo is very up, and in fact, a lot of the '80s rock dancing was already there in the '40s. It was our job to show that on the screen."

How does a choreographer, even a good one, feel about working with Gene Kelly? "It was the greatest experience of my life," Ortega said simply. "He helped immensely — he even screened his old movies for me, showing me how to set up the camera and how to plan for dance numbers. He talked to everyone on the set; he even hung around with the rock-and-rollers we hired for the *Xanadu* number. He participated whenever he thought he could help." Kelly and Newton-John do

one brief but superb dance number together, recalls Ortega, with Olivia dressed in a 1940s WAC uniform. It isn't one of the old Gene Kelly leaping-from-the-tables routines, just a little soft shoe and some elegantly understated turns, but it's enough to bring back the memories and remind us that this man Kelly is still the best in the business.

But *Xanadu*'s grand finale is the film's truly spectacular event. It is a climax to a very special motion picture, where whirling, singing, dancing, the center of all the dreams is Olivia Newton-John as Kira, living everyone's fantasies, making *Xanadu* a wonderland for Gene Kelly, Michael Beck, and anyone who views it. It's a good bet that Ms. Newton-John will have more gold platters to add to her collection. And the entire movie audience — young and old — will have a film that they can take to their hearts.



SUSPENDED IN TIME

XANADU'S GLITZY COSTUMES

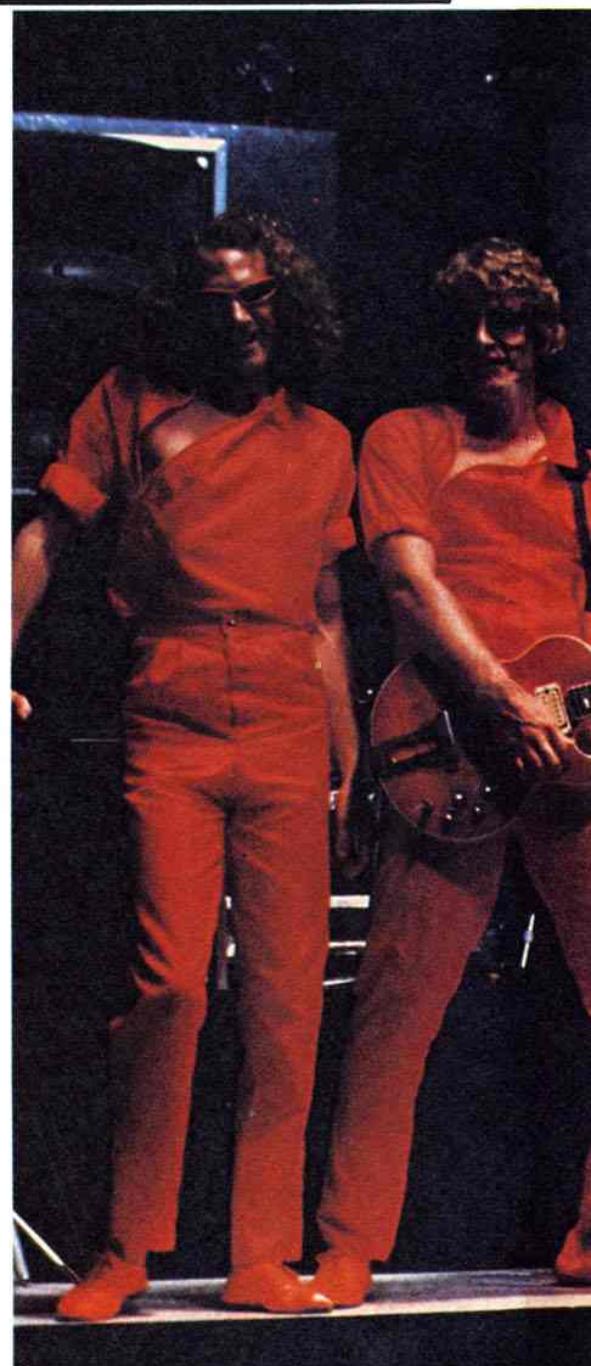
Costume design sketches by Xanadu's designer, Bobbi Mannix.

*Bobbi Mannix
"Xanadu" 1980*

By Roberta McKenzie

In films, the costume designers' efforts frequently go unsung, yet their creations often play a pivotal role in producing a movie's special look and feel. Their costumes must define and delineate both characters and settings, and the designers are constantly challenged to create clothing that enhances mood, music, action, lighting and special effects.

Xanadu's designer was constantly solving specialized problems and, in clothing the nine goddesses who are the central figures of the story, her relations sparked another idea altogether. Costumes worn by the mythical Kira and her



Xanadu's Costume Designer, Bobbi Mannix, also attired *The Warriors* and *The Long Riders*. She has worked as a commercial fashion designer as well. "I was 'raised' on Seventh Avenue," said Mannix, referring to New York City's famed garment district.

Bobbi Mannix and the rest of her crew have created over 260 costumes for *Xanadu*, running the gamut from Gene Kelly's sharply urbane outfits through the New Wave costumes of the dancers in the Fiorucci number, to the soft pastel frocks worn by

Mannix's sketches for two costumes featured in Xanadu's finale, and the actual outfits as they appear in the film.

Olivia Newton-John and her sister muses. In fact, the film has a riot of distinctive characters whose roles had to be defined in terms of fabric, color and design — sometimes red hot, sometimes more subdued and sensual, and always amplifying the desired tone of each sequence.

Joel Silver, *Xanadu*'s co-producer, believes that this film should equal

enchantment. To put his production staff in the mood for movie magic, Silver, an avid film buff, screened old Technicolor musicals. Everybody watched. And everybody cooperated.

Xanadu was "a movie with total communication within the working staff," said her assistant, Marilyn Vance. Mannix and her staff were able to see the dancers rehearse in order to know what was required so that their costumes would complement, not hinder, their movements. It was equally important for the designer to be aware of the more than eighty special effects being used and their consequent limita-

tions on the costuming.

One unusual problem arose in creating costumes for the opening sequence, where the muses, one by one, "step out" of a mural. The dancers were first filmed against a blue background, then "matted" onto film of the mural, thus creating the illusion that the mural had come to life. This process, called *blue screen matting*, made it impractical to construct their costumes from a diaphanous material like chiffon, since the blue from the screen would show through the transparent material, creating "tears," an imperfection in which the background appears to be jabbing into the actors. For this

same reason, blue or purple fabric was also out. Chiffon, however, was just the sort of light, flowing fabric needed to achieve the desired unearthly effect.

Mannix decided to try silk prints instead, but searching California and New York, she came up empty handed. Finally she located some French silks — sensuous, opaque and flowing. She chose her colors carefully, avoiding blues and violets, and the effect was perfect.

The "Battle of the Bands" number is another prime example of the complexities involved in coordinating different aspects of the filming. In this fantasy sequence, Danny

The Tubes — garbed in electric orange — the New Wave rock group spotlighted in *Xanadu's* spectacular Battle of the Bands.





In all, 260 costumes were created by Mannix and her associates for Xanadu's various numbers.

McGuire and Sonny Malone each imagine what their new club will look like — what flavor it will have. The designers were challenged to create clothing from two different eras — the '40s and the '80s — that would merge comfortably as Danny's Big Band and Sonny's punk rock group, the Tubes, intermingle at the scene's climax.

According to Mannix, today's trend in fashion is back to the '40s sharp, angular lines — "New Wave is an exaggerated version of '40s clothing — so mingling styles wasn't difficult." As for colors, "I kept the '80s fairly monochromatic," said Mannix. She put the Tubes in electric orange against a black stage and the '80s dancers in very intense, hot tones. According to Mannix, the idea was to "add a high-voltage look without it being scary."

The members of the '40s band wear formal black tuxedos and the wall behind them is softly lit with orange and blue. The dancers for both bands wear magentas, deep blues, and black and white stripes. As the two segments come together, they form a definite color pattern. As Mannix put it, "When they blend, you remember only certain things and those are color-coordinated."

Another fascinating array of dancers appears in Fiorucci's where Danny goes to "glitz" up his wardrobe in a manner befitting Xanadu's co-owner. And there is glitz aplenty at this ultra-chic fashion store. In this sequence, Kelly has seven costume changes, all very modern and all original creations of the movie's designer. In and around his changes and soft-shoe modeling, a retinue of dancers perform in New Wave costumes. Some wear everyday fabrics





Jitterbuggers from the spectacular '40s jazz segment of *The Battle of the Bands*. (left)

Ultimate glitz! Web-clad dancer from *Xanadu's* Fiorucci's segment. (right)



in up-to-the-minute lines. Other dancers, clothed in black leotards and glittery spider-webs, alternately jerk and slink through the number. Combined with the special effects, the sequence is electrifying.

The final scene — "My favorite," said Mannix — takes place in the finished *Xanadu* cabaret. It features 237 dancers, roller skaters and specialty acts, all requiring some unification of costume, so they look as though they belong to the set. "But if all those clothes were coordinated, your eye wouldn't know where to look," said Mannix. Therefore, the costumes had to be designed so that different groups were recognizable. Gene Kelly leads off the number, skating onto the set in sedate black evening clothes. The *Xanadu* ensemble follows, men in shocking blue and black, women in magenta and gold. Kira and the muses go through four songs and four costume changes in the course of four minutes. Perched on a pedestal in the center of a round stage, Kira, accompanied by her eight sister muses, appears as a '40s tap dancer, a fringed cowgirl, a rock star and a showgirl in Erté-inspired garments. Then the muses, once again bedecked in the flouncy frocks worn in their heavenly state, soar out of the club... and the picture.

Before threading a needle, Mannix thoroughly researched the Greek myth in order to understand what the muses were about — Kira and her sisters are the nine daughters of Zeus, goddesses of poetry, music and art. Then Mannix updated the myth, adapting the toga-like draping usually associated with Hellenic figures into contemporary attire.



The graceful silk costumes of Xanadu's muses...

Mannix wanted to keep a flowing, breezy look to the muses' costumes — "anything that a dancer wears has to flow, move smoothly." She was also motivated to create a very frilly, soft look, since she feels that bringing back really "feminine" clothing is important. "Olivia," she said, "is a perfect person to help do just that."

These are the dresses that Joan Marcus, Special Promotion Consultant for *Xanadu*, felt should be made available to clothing connoisseurs around the country. Now, thanks to her ability to see in Mannix's designs the seed of a popular phenomenon, *Xanadu's* dresses have been translated into a line of clothing by Jack Mulqueen Associates.

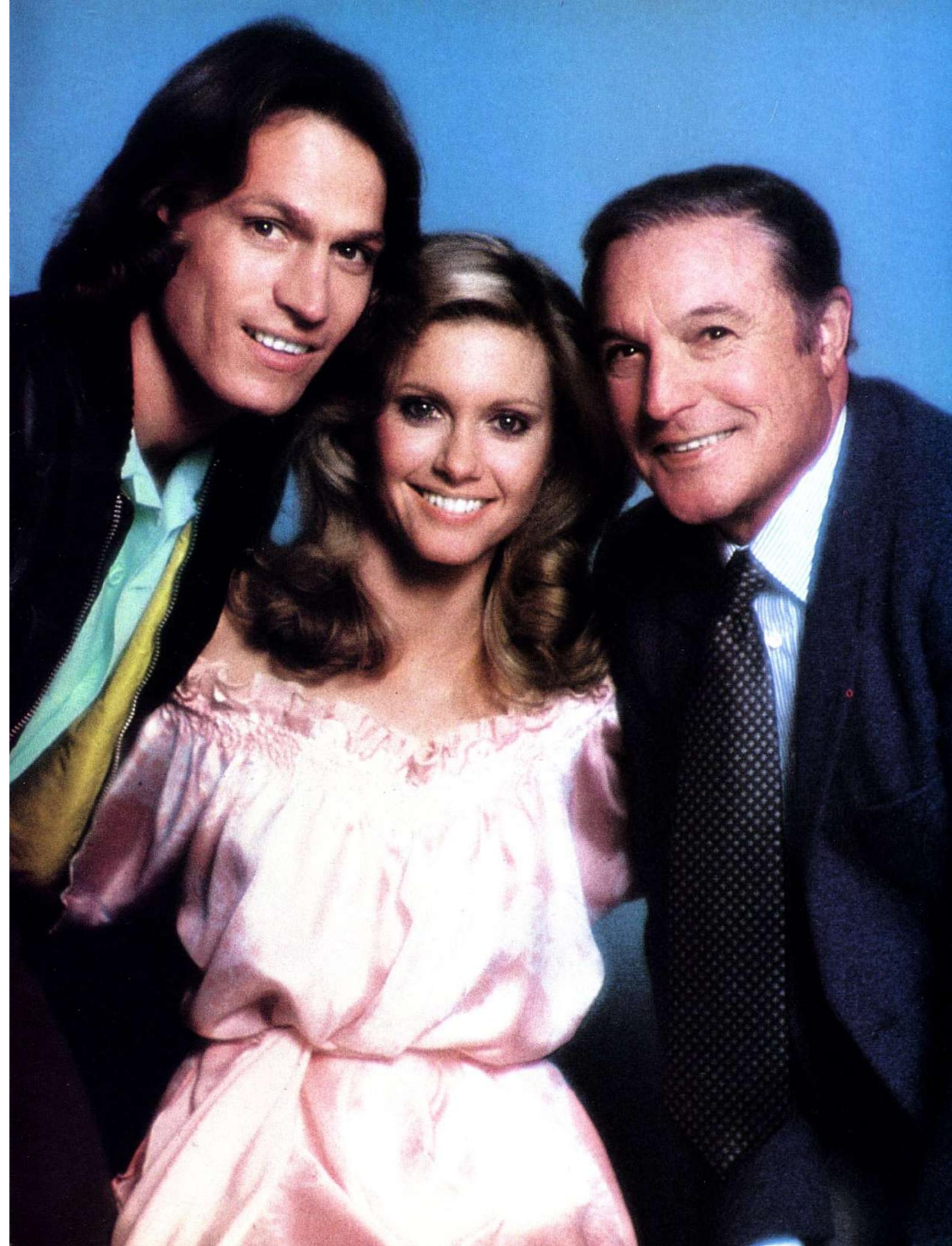
Mulqueen, understanding the special touch that was required, obtained fine silk from Korea. Duplicating the fabric designs, he adapted the muses' original costumes, creating thirty unique dresses in two modes — a very elegant standard line and more whimsical, fantasy styles.

So if you found yourself excited by the fantasy world of *Xanadu*, if you felt you never wanted the movie to end, all you've got to do is find the nearest *Xanadu* boutique and take a part of the dream home with you. For like muses and music, dreams belong to everyone.



...created from Mannix's fanciful designs...

...are now available at Xanadu boutiques across the nation.



EXODUS

